



# RESTLESS INDIA



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# RESTLESS INDIA

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## Foreword: India Today

THE surrender of Japan was quickly followed by a major crisis in India. While the British Labor Government faced conflict in Egypt, the Levant, Indonesia, Greece, and other areas of imperial interest, developments in India — with its 400,000,000 people, strategic location, economic significance, and potential greatness of power — overshadowed all these critical events.

What was happening in India reflected more than a local or regional state of affairs. It had become part of the international evolution of our times: the struggle of colonial peoples for control of their own destiny, the decline of old centers of power in Britain and on the European continent, and the rise of new world capitals in Washington and Moscow.

There have been other crises in Indian-British relations, and the latest events do not necessarily represent the last conflict before independence is achieved. But they reveal special characteristics that are worth noting — for example, the coincidence of political crisis and dire economic developments. According to the most conservative official estimates, India early in 1946 faced a food shortage of three million tons, as a result of drought in various parts of the country. In the light of food shortages elsewhere in Asia and in Europe, India could hardly escape mass starvation, for food imports were not likely to make up the deficit.

These economic prospects faced the people of India at a time when political feeling had already reached new heights. The trials of certain Indian officers of the former Japanese puppet Indian Independence Army, beginning in the fall of 1945, aroused strong opposition from the Indian National Congress and even had some effects in Moslem League circles. In subsequent elections for the

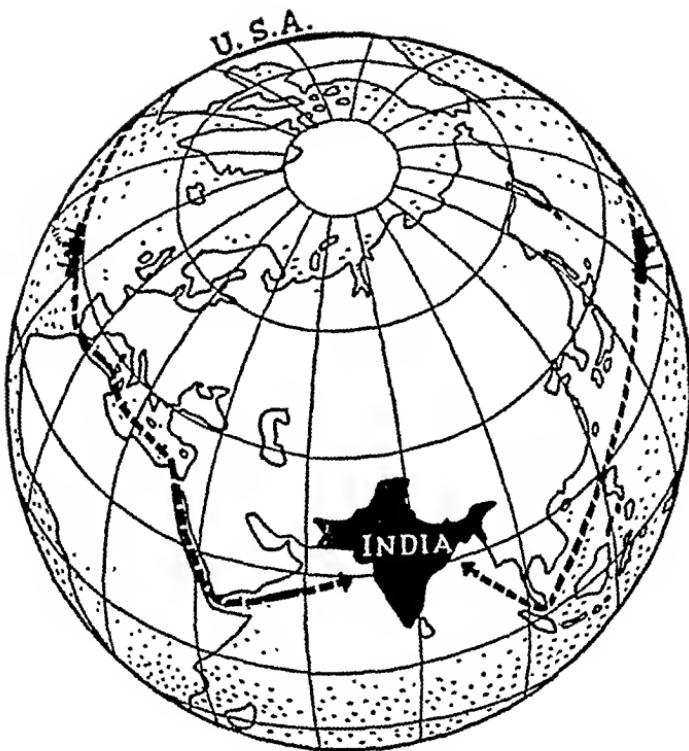


## I. From Chicago to Calcutta

From the great American midwestern city of Chicago, with its stockyards and steel works, to Calcutta, metropolis of eastern India and home of the jute mill, the distance is roughly between one-third and one-half way around the earth. Yet in the Second World War thousands upon thousands of Americans—soldiers and government workers—went this far and beyond to defeat Japan and help reestablish peace.

A few traveled by airplane. For a long time after Pearl Harbor the only route was down the eastern seaboard of the United States to Brazil, across the Atlantic to Africa's western bulge, then on to Cairo, beyond the pyramids to the Indian port of Karachi, and finally, at the other end of India, to Calcutta itself. After the Axis was beaten in North Africa a second route was set up, cutting out the hops to Brazil and West Africa, and using the West Indies, the Azores, Casablanca, and Tripoli as stopping-points on the way to Cairo.

But most of the Americans traveled by boat. Although their path sometimes lay across the Pacific, they usually followed an Atlantic route from New York around the Cape of Good Hope, up the east coast of Africa, and on to India—or, later, went through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal. The time involved might be anywhere from four weeks to two months. By airplane, barring delays, the trip might take only a week.



### INDIA THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

Whether by boat or by plane, large number of Americans were coming into contact with India for the first time. It was a country whose name they had often heard, but about which they knew little. India to many Americans is simply the land Columbus was looking for when he discovered the Western world—a land of spices and princes of limitless wealth, of strange religions and stranger magic. Or perhaps it stands out because of its huge population and poverty, the turbaned men and fascinating animals of Kipling's stories, and a man named Gandhi dressed in a loincloth and fighting for independence. But while all this is part of India, there is much more—more than one can readily absorb.

The American who visits or reads about India comes from

a country with one of the highest standards of living in the world, a country which long ago won its independence. Looking at India, he sees half-clad poverty, dirt, a lack of modern conveniences, and, in some sections of the population, a spirit of servility. He finds that servants are cheap and submissive, constantly *salaaming* to their employers, bowing low and placing the right palm on the forehead. He is inclined to say to himself, "If anybody tried to make me live under these conditions I wouldn't stand for it. Why are the Indians willing to exist this way?" It would be easy to conclude that the Indians are a spiritless people, content to live in degradation. But this would be grossly unjust. For inside India the desire to build a new nation exists side by side with the spirit of an outmoded past. This is one reason why millions of Indians are anxious to win independence, securing the power to control their own destiny.

### WHAT IS INDIA?

Almost anything said about India is true of some part of it, for in a country of 400,000,000 people with a vast territory diverse conditions exist. Clothing, food, and climate, and the physical characteristics of the population frequently vary from place to place. Air-conditioned railway trains pass near villages in which there is not a single electric light, gas stove, or telephone. Not far from great steel mills peasants use wooden ploughs with iron tips to break the soil. In the cities some people sleep in modern hotels while others use the streets as their bed. Similar disturbing contrasts could be found in other countries, including our own, but in India the variety is more startling to the American because he is less accustomed to it, and the differences are sharper than in the United States.

In many parts of India life hardly appears to change at all; in others it is altering rapidly. For this is a country not only of

great backwardness, but also of great possibilities. An illiterate Indian peasant living an animal existance in a hovel seems to hold little promise for the future; yet he would be a different man if he had opportunities for education and development. India already possesses its educated industrialists, officials, politicians, scientists, and professional men. In the decades ahead it will have its educated peasants and workers. But before that can happen many difficult problems will have to be faced, especially the problem of securing independence and using it wisely.

The contrasts within India show that it is not enough to know things that are true about the country. It is necessary to know those things that are *most* true—those facts and ideas giving the clearest picture of the country as a whole, showing where it is going as well as where it has been. When we have such a picture, we shall really have bridged the gap between Chicago and Calcutta.

## 2. The Country and the People

In 1941 there were approximately 389,000,000 people in India, almost as many as in the whole of Europe west of Russia, and nearly three times as many as in the United States. Today the total must be over 400,000,000. Since the population of the entire world is roughly 2,000,000,000 people, this means that one-fifth of the human race, one person in every five, lives in India. The only country in the world that is thought to have more people is China, but no census has been taken there in recent times.

### THE HOME THEY LIVE IN

India is just as impressive in area as in population, for it is a world in itself—a vast subcontinent stretching out from the underside of Asia as Italy does from Europe, but containing nine times as many people as Italy and thirteen times as much land. Altogether India occupies more than 1,575,000 square miles, which makes it equal to three-fourths of Europe excluding Russia, and some of its districts are larger and have more people than European states like Denmark or Switzerland. But there are seven other areas that are even larger than India. These are the U.S.S.R., China, Canada, the United States, Brazil, Australia, and French West Africa.

On its western and northwestern land frontiers India is bordered by Iran and Afghanistan; on the north and northeast by Sinkiang, an outlying province of China, and Tibet. India nowhere touches the Soviet Union, but in one area the two countries are separated only by narrow strips of Afghanistan and Sinkiang. Cradled in the crescent-shaped eastern half of the

# INDIA IS SMALLER THAN U.S.A. BUT HAS 3 TIMES AS MANY PEOPLE

INDIA



1,575,000 Sq.M.

U.S.A.



3,027,000 Sq.M.

*EACH FIGURE REPRESENTS 20,000,000 PERSONS*

northern border is the hilly kingdom of Nepal, a small state under strong British influence. Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, stretching upward for more than five miles, is in Nepal. Much farther to the east lies Burma, British territory which was part of India until 1937.

India is shaped like two triangles standing back to back, so that there are four tips—in the extreme north, east, south, and west. The distance from north to south is about 2,000 miles, from east to west roughly the same. To the south lies the island of Ceylon, a separate British colony set in the great Indian Ocean. In the west the long Indian coast fronts on the Arabian Sea, and in the east on the Bay of Bengal. Virtually the entire country forms a distinct geographical unit whose land contacts with other areas have been confined to rather narrow channels of communication. Over the centuries various passes in the northern mountains have permitted the movement of

merchants and armies. The most famous is the 40-mile Khyber Pass between India and Afghanistan, a route frequently used by invaders of India.

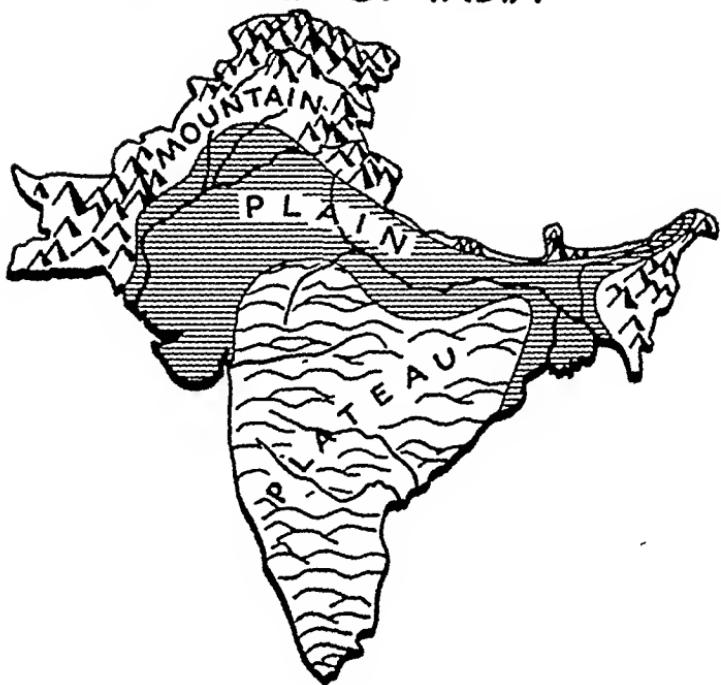
### MOUNTAIN, PLAIN, AND PLATEAU

There are three main geographical areas: the Himalayan Mountain Zone, the Hindustan Plain, and the plateau or upland region of the southern peninsula. Both historically and at the present time the most important of these is the Hindustan Plain, which is estimated to contain one-half or more of the population of the country. This plain is a flat band of varying width, extending across India from west to east. It is the home of India's three greatest rivers, the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra, together with their tributaries—all of crucial importance for irrigation. Since the eastern half of Hindustan has much more rainfall than the western half, the bulk of the population of the plain is concentrated in the east, with the result that in the lower Ganges Valley the population sometimes reaches over 1,000 per square mile.

The Ganges River, sacred to the Hindu religion, is the heart of Indian economic life. Rising in the Himalayas, it makes its way for 1,500 miles and finally empties into the Bay of Bengal. In its fertile valley almost every Indian crop is grown—rice, wheat, sugar cane, cotton, and many others. Its leading centers include the holy city of Benares, Patna, Allahabad, Cawnpore, and the capital of India at New Delhi. Farther west lies the hot valley of the Indus, whose chief cities are Lahore, Amritsar, and Karachi, an important seaport in the northwest. To the east of the Ganges area is the valley of the Brahmaputra, which waters a land of rice, tea, and jute.

North of the Hindustan Plain stand the Himalayas, a great rampart of mountains containing some of the world's highest

# THE LAND OF INDIA



peaks. In very ancient times this region was a sea which extended west to Europe, but geological pressure turned it into mountain country. At the northernmost border, in the Himalayan zone, lies the Indian state of Kashmir, a land of marvelous scenery and many valuable resources. From its name the English language has taken the word "cashmere" to describe certain types of woolen cloth.

South of the Hindustan Plain lies the great V-shaped peninsula of India, chiefly plateau and upland country, including such rivers as the Cauvery, Kistna, and Godavari. On the coasts of the peninsula there are mountain ranges called *ghats*. The Western Ghats rise abruptly from the sea to a height of one-half mile or more and slope slowly toward the east. The Eastern Ghats, much lower, are really hills rather than mountains.

## RAIN MEANS LIFE

Throughout the world, especially among people who make their living from the soil, rainfall is a subject of almost constant discussion. But in India the rains are particularly important because they are so uncertain. The climate of India is determined mainly by two monsoons, or seasonal winds. The summer monsoon, which blows in from the southwest in June after crossing thousands of miles of warm ocean water, brings the country nine-tenths of its rainfall; but the distribution is uneven, leaving some areas dry and others well-watered for crops.

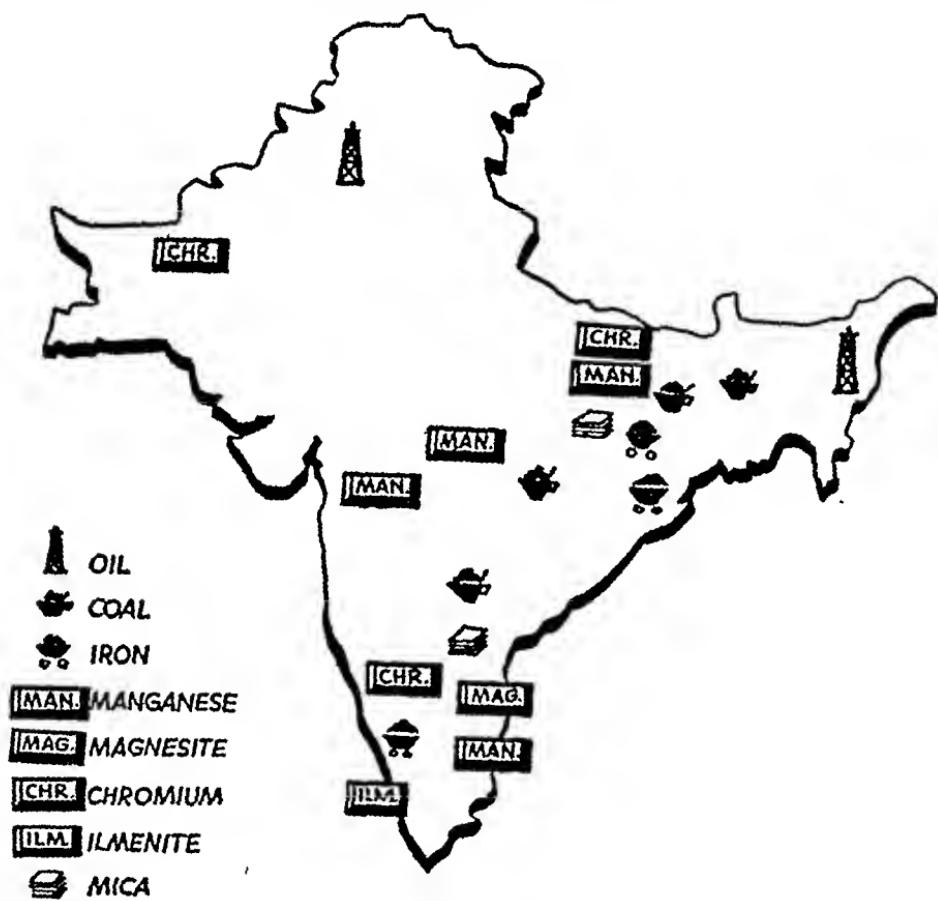
Although half of India is in the temperate zone, and all types of weather can be found within the country, the climate is basically tropical. Instead of the four seasons with which we are familiar in the United States, three main seasons occur in most areas. Beginning with the monsoon in June there is a wet, humid, summer season; from October until the end of February the winter monsoon blows in from the northeast, bringing cooler days and even a period of light frost in the Ganges Valley; in March a hot season begins, with the thermometer rising to 100 degrees or more during the day, although the nights are cooler.

## RICH COUNTRY OR POOR?

The people of India are extremely poor, and their country is on the whole poorly developed. But the land of India is rich both in the products of the soil and the minerals buried beneath it.

India is the world's leading producer of hides, skins, and peanuts, and ranks second in tea, cane sugar, cotton, and rice. It also has a virtual monopoly of jute, a fiber with many uses, particularly when manufactured into a loosely-woven cloth known as burlap. The cotton crop of the American South is

# INDIA'S MINERAL WEALTH



nese; possesses large quantities of limestone and magnesite, also important in iron and steel production; and accounts for more than three-fourths of the world's output of sheet mica, used in manufacturing electrical equipment.

The chief mineral deficiencies are in the leading non-ferrous metals—copper, lead, and zinc—in such other significant metals as nickel, tungsten, cobalt, molybdenum, antimony, mercury, and cadmium, and in petroleum, potash, and phosphates. While it is true that the reserves of India's more abundant mineral

resources are low for its population and area, that the United States and the Soviet Union are more richly endowed with natural resources, and that some other countries surpass India in individual minerals, the country is, on the whole, well fitted for industrialization.

India is richer in metals and minerals than China, which is planning to industrialize, or than Japan, Italy, and France, which have long been industrial nations. Moreover, India's full resources are as yet unknown—because geological surveys are incomplete—and intensive application of industrial science, as in the manufacture of synthetics, could make good some of the natural deficiencies. To the country's own resources there should also be added the mineral output of surrounding areas from which purchases could be made. For example, Burma, a next-door neighbor, is rich in oil and many of the supplementary minerals—silver, copper, zinc, lead, and tungsten—of which India is short. Large-scale industrialization is therefore entirely possible, and when it occurs the Indians will become one of the world's leading industrial peoples.

### THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

India is a land of hundreds of thousands of villages poorly linked together. In 1939, it is true, there were over 41,000 miles of railways, giving India the fourth largest railway network in the world, but the Indian railways are barely able to meet the country's needs. Although most of the people depend on roads rather than trains, good roads are not extensive, and in the rainy season travel is particularly difficult. Many of the rivers are also undependable, overflowing when the rains come and drying up at other times. Canal transportation has not been widely developed, and coastwise travel by boat is limited because there are few good harbors. During the war years there has been a sig-

### 3. More About the People

In talking about India Americans probably think first of all of the deep poverty of the country. Perhaps the second fact that has impressed us is the existence of many different religions, languages, and customs. Some Americans even have come to believe that the people of India consist of innumerable hostile groups, but this is a misleading conclusion. Unquestionably India has serious internal conflicts, but so have many other countries—for example, China, where political differences between the Central Government and Communists have resulted in civil strife. The diversity of the Soviet Union, with its 150-odd nationalities, or little Switzerland with its four official languages, also indicates that widely different peoples can live together within the framework of a single state.

#### VARIETY OF INDIA

Once this is recognized, it must be admitted that India has a more varied population than any country except perhaps the Soviet Union. In the United States we are familiar with distinctions in speech and outlook between North, South, East, and West, between great cities and farming areas. But in India regional and group differences are far more powerful than in our country. The people of Bengal province in the east, the Punjab in north-central India, and Sind in the northwest, possess distinctive histories and special characteristics. And within the provinces there are groups like the Pathans of the northwest frontier, the Marathas of Bombay province, and the Tamils of Madras, with their own backgrounds and languages.

Like most countries, India possesses a number of religions, but

since the followers of Hinduism and Islam together make up nine-tenths of the people the variety of religion is no greater than in the United States. The problem is not to reduce the number of religions, but to bring the two main groups into an increasingly harmonious relationship, especially in the field of politics.

### HOW MANY LANGUAGES?

The language situation is more complex; in 1931 there were 11 main groups, spoken by more than ten million people each and accounting for five-sixths of the population. The most important language group, Hindustani, is spoken by 125-150,000,000 people in northern India and is regarded as the national language by the leading political party, the Indian National Congress. The languages of northern and central India are related to each other and have a degree of mutual intelligibility; but sharp differences exist between north and south, for the latter has its own tongues, such as Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kanarese.

The situation resembles that in Europe during the Middle Ages, when poor communications and other factors caused a variety of languages to exist in territories which later became unified national states. Italy, England, France, and Germany all had to go through the process of establishing a single spoken and written language, just as China, which has long had a national written language, is now striving to establish the supremacy of a single speech for the whole country. Few persons familiar with the Chinese situation will doubt that in the decades ahead the official speech will become known throughout the country, so that virtually all Chinese will be able to understand one another. In India too it is reasonable to assume that the language problem can be solved.

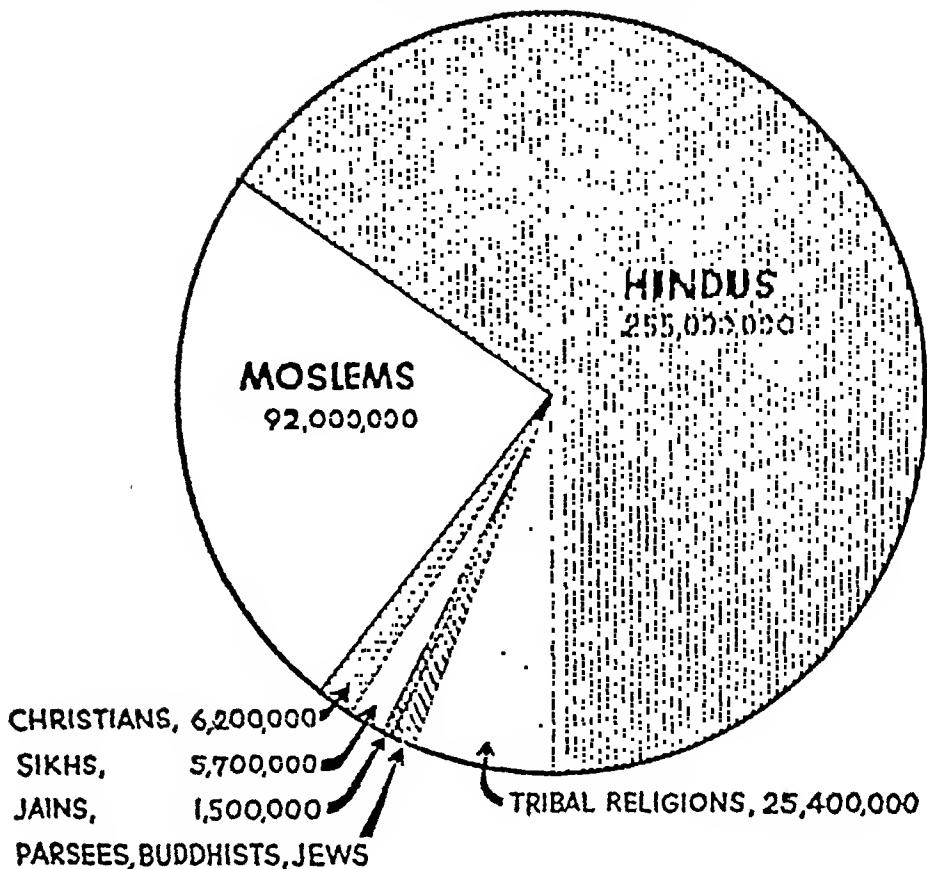
from about 1000 A.D. on, but the vast majority of the people remained Hindu. By the end of the seventeenth century the Mogul Empire, which was under Moslem leadership, covered virtually the whole of India, and many Hindus either were forcibly converted, or found it to their economic advantage to change their religion. Although the Mogul Dynasty was established by foreign invaders, most Indian Moslems are descendants of Hindus who were converted. This means that Hindus and Moslems do not form two separate racial groups.

The philosophy of Islam is socially more democratic than that of Hinduism. The Koran is the Moslem holy book, or bible, and all Moslems believe in one god, whose chief prophet is Mohammed. Although Hindus and Moslems are found in all parts of India, the Moslems, numbering some 92,000,000 according to the census of 1941, are concentrated in the northwest and northeast, while the Hindus are especially preponderant in central India and the south. Certain differences in practice between the two religions are worth noting. Moslems allow divorce and Hindus do not; unlike the Hindus, Moslems eat beef, although they do not eat pork. Hinduism is limited largely to those who are born into the faith, but Islam is a militant faith actively seeking new believers.

The philosophy of a religion is frequently much more pure and elevated than its practice in everyday life. Despite certain democratic aspects of Islam, nothing could be more undemocratic than the practice of secluding Moslem women and requiring them to be covered from head to foot in impenetrable garments whenever they appear in public. The seclusion of women has also spread to some sections of the Hindus, but Hindu women do not wear the veil.

In later chapters Hindu-Moslem political differences will be discussed. Here it is important to note that India cannot be

# INDIA'S RELIGIONS



divided on a simple religious basis. Not only do Hindus and Moslems usually have the same racial composition and often speak the same language, but the Hindus and Moslems of a particular area frequently feel much closer to each other than to their fellow-religionists in another part of the country. In Bengal province, for example, the mass of Moslems and Hindus speak Bengali and follow similar customs, while in rural India as a whole Hindu and Moslem peasants generally live in the same villages with little friction.

## OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The Indian Christians, the third largest religious community, have over 6,000,000 members, of whom more than half live in South India. A majority are Protestants, but the Roman Catholic minority is the largest single group.

Next come the Sikhs, numbering 5,700,000 in 1941, of whom about two-thirds live in the Punjab. Sikhism was founded in the early sixteenth century as a protest against the caste ideas of Hinduism by Guru Nanak, who sought to create a link between Hinduism and Islam. As a result, Sikh teachings have something of both religions in them: the Sikhs follow the Hindus in cremating their dead and in not eating beef but, like the Moslems, are monotheists and do not worship images. A tall people by Indian standards, the Sikhs have a powerful military tradition.

Other Indian religions include Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, and various tribal faiths. The Jains who, like the Buddhists, believe in avoiding injury to any living creature, follow an austere religion which was founded about 2,500 years ago by Mahavira, a famous teacher. The Parsees, or Zoroastrians, are a small but highly influential community whose ancestors came from Persia to India in the eighth century A.D. India's greatest industrial establishment, producing iron, steel, chemicals and many other essential items, was set up and developed by Parsees, members of the Tata family. The Buddhists, whose religion will be discussed in the next chapter, are the remnants of a faith once powerful in India. The Jews, a small community of about 25,000, are concentrated in Bombay and Cochin. The tribal faiths, primitive in character, are found largely in parts of central India and along India's far-ranging land frontiers.

## IS INDIA A NATION?

Because of India's diversity and many non-modern aspects, it is sometimes said that India is not really a single country, but rather a group of countries and that whatever unity India possesses is the result of British administration.

Very likely an independent India will have to grant a marked degree of local autonomy to various groups and areas. But the ideal of a united India, far from being a recent creation, goes back a long way in history and, as we shall see in the next chapter, at times has become a reality. The differences within India should not be considered insuperable obstacles to unity. Although the problems of the American colonies were simpler than those of present-day India, they, too, appeared insurmountable to many people at the time. And even the American Revolution did not settle the question of unity, for it was not until a long civil war had been fought that the Union really was cemented. The ability of Indians to maintain a united country can only be demonstrated in practice, but there is no reason to assume in advance that they cannot ultimately work out a form of government which will recognize the diversity of the country within the framework of a single state.

## 4. The Glory of Old India

Something less than five thousand years ago at Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus River valley an advanced civilization already existed, with an irrigated agriculture, highly developed trade, and impressive culture. The "City of the Dead" (this is what Mohenjo-Daro means) had brick houses two or three stories high, a drainage system better than any known in Europe before the nineteenth century, and a written language. Four hundred and fifty miles away in the Punjab the city of Harappa was at a comparable level of development. It was only in 1924 that archaeologists uncovered these cities, but even a glimpse of India's long-buried past suggests that in material life Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa may be compared with ancient Babylonia and Egypt.

### THE ARYANS COME TO INDIA

Very few Indians have heard about Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. But, whether educated or illiterate, they know of the glory of the later India. It was probably about 1500-2000 B.C. that waves of people who called themselves Aryans began to roll into northern India. These Aryans, who had a language of the same family as Persian, Greek, Latin, Germanic, and Slavic, clashed with the peoples already living in India, including those known as Dravidians. Slowly the Aryans became dominant, blending with their rivals or forcing them to withdraw to central and southern India.

At first a pastoral people, the Aryans later became farmers and city-dwellers. They adopted much of the tax system and village life of their predecessors and in some places developed a republican form of government in addition to the usual monarchies.

Life rested first of all on the villages, where a considerable degree of self-government existed, and it is interesting to note that the status of women apparently was much higher than it is in India today.

### TALES OF GODS AND MEN

The *Vedas*, India's oldest existing literature, are devotional poems in which the Aryans allude to the world of nature about them, their rites, and their theories as to how man and the universe began. Linked with the *Vedas* are the *Upanishads*, great metaphysical treatises in prose. Two of the most famous Indian works are the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, long epic poems whose names are known even to Indians who cannot read or write. The *Mahabharata* is a collection of fables, love-stories, accounts of the wars of ancient heroes, and philosophical-religious discourses. It contains the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Blessed One), a poem describing various doctrines of Hinduism. The *Ramayana* is the story of a war fought by gods and men in which Rama, the hero, rescues his wife, Sita, from a demon who has abducted her. The name of Rama stands for perfection and gentlemanliness in India at the present time, while Sita symbolizes the devoted and faithful wife.

In the centuries immediately before the Christian era, India—like ancient Greece and China—underwent a far-reaching intellectual development. While the ideas of Confucius were spreading among the Chinese and those of Socrates among the Greeks, the religious thought of Gautama Buddha was having its effect in India as part of a revolt against caste and priesthood. Gautama, who was born in the sixth century B.C., is said to have spent his youth in luxury as the son of an Indian king, but afterwards became an ascetic. He developed a religious theory which advocated right conduct, right faith, and right action. Today Buddhism has only some two hundred thousand followers in India,

but it was influential there for many centuries, and continues to be powerful in a number of Asiatic countries, including China, Japan, Burma, and Siam.

### ASOKA UNITES INDIA

In 326 B.C. Alexander the Great invaded India, but he died a few years later, and his Indian empire was soon destroyed by Chandragupta Maurya, a great general who won control of the entire northern part of the country. Chandragupta's grandson Asoka, ruled for more than forty years in the third century B.C. and controlled the whole of India except the extreme south. One of the greatest men of all times, Asoka revolted against the bloodshed of war, became a Buddhist, and devoted himself to the welfare of his people. Although encouraging the spread of Buddhism, he promoted religious tolerance and freedom of speech. But less than a century after his death his empire collapsed, and there was a period of disunity until the establishment of the Gupta Empire in the fourth century A.D.

The Gupta emperors, who again united the north of India, ruled for over two hundred years. Theirs was an era of great art and literature, which produced the dramatist and poet Kalidasa, sometimes known as "the Indian Shakespeare." His play, *Sakuntala*, which has been produced in the United States, is based on a story in the *Mahabharata* about the love of King Dusyanta for Sakuntala, the beautiful ward of a hermit.

Although religion has played a powerful part in Indian life, India also has been known for its scientific knowledge and is credited with developing the zero and the decimal system. These were passed on to the Arabs, who in turn gave them to medieval Europe. Chess too is regarded as an Indian invention; and on a different level, it is worth noting that many of our Western fables and fairy tales have old Indian analogues.

## A NEW UNITY UNDER AKBAR

Beginning with the eighth century A.D. India underwent a long series of Moslem invasions, which were climaxed by the establishment of the Mogul Empire under Babur, a Turk, in 1526. His dynasty reached its height under his grandson, Akbar, who, along with Asoka, belongs in the top ranks of the world's great leaders. Akbar, a Moslem, was a man of great tolerance. One of his wives was a Hindu, he appointed a Hindu as one of his chief ministers, and he employed Hindu and Moslem officials according to ability. Not wishing religious differences to divide the mass of Indians, Akbar sought to combine all religions. He wore the sacred girdle of the Zoroastrians, had Hindu marks on his forehead, encouraged the Jesuits who had come to India, and invited representatives of all faiths to visit his court. Before his time southern India had long gone its separate way, witnessing the rise and fall of its own great empires. But Akbar the Great won control of practically all India.

The Mogul conquest did not greatly alter India's political and economic structure, for the Moguls were soon absorbed into Indian life. But Akbar did improve the land revenue system, and he encouraged Persian influences which had been introduced into Indian art and architecture before his time. Great mosques, tombs, palaces, and halls were constructed, and marble and precious stones were used with a free hand. His grandson, Shah Jehan, employed 22,000 workers for twenty-two years to erect the beautiful Taj Mahal in memory of his wife.

Akbar had built a united Indian empire, but the reign of his fanatical, intolerant great-grandson, Aurangzeb, saw the beginning of the breakup of the Mogul Dynasty. After Aurangzeb's death in 1707 there was a sharp struggle for control, first of all by the rising Maratha power. New invaders, this time from the

West, were also on the scene, and in the next century and a half the control of India passed from Indian into British hands.

### A GREAT TRADITION

Even this brief description of a few high points of Indian history suggests that the people of India have a tradition second to none in the history of mankind. Although much of this past is now outmoded, it colors the thought of present-day Indians and strengthens the popular movement for independence. It is clear that India, despite its immensity and variety, has had an important degree of cultural unity and that the greatest rulers, Asoka and Akbar, placed the major part of the country under one political authority. It is also significant that these men were outstanding for their spirit of religious tolerance and their desire to have all their subjects live together in peace.

## 5. The Indian Peasant

India is a land of almost 700,000 villages. Nine persons out of every ten live in rural areas, and almost three persons in four depend directly on the soil for their living. The peasant's existence, bare and routinized, is confined mainly to the village, although he may sometimes visit a bazaar or fair a few miles away, and occasional festive occasions or religious holidays provide a change. The villages are almost self-sufficient, with their own blacksmiths, carpenters, one or more shops, and a temple or mosque. The peasant's diet, as monotonous as his life, generally includes such foods as rice, some vegetables, pancakes of unleavened bread, and gruel of parched gram. Along the rivers of Bengal fish may be added. The Hindu peasant is a vegetarian by religion, while the Moslem peasant, who is not under the same restrictions, seldom can afford meat.

### A TYPICAL VILLAGE

Villages vary somewhat from place to place according to the character of the region and its standard of living. Perhaps the most prosperous peasants are found in the highly irrigated areas of the Punjab. The usual Indian village—a group of huts in the fields with a small, impoverished population—is approached by a bullock path running off from a narrow one or two-lane road. Inside the village there are a few low mud-brick houses with straw-thatched roofs and walls plastered with a mixture of mud, water, and cow dung. The community is completely without streets, electricity, gas, telephones, or a sewage system, and few modern articles are visible at first sight—perhaps a kerosene lantern, a padlock, and some thin wire binding the thatching to

the bamboo poles which support it. Within the houses there may see a rudimentary fireplace, a few badly frayed cloths and some pieces of crockery. At first glance the village seems as if it had not altered in the past fifty or one hundred years, but this is only at first glance, for changes have slowly occurred.

### IS INDIA OVERPOPULATED?

The poverty of the peasant arises from many factors. First, too many people are forced to live on the land, since there are few other ways in which to make a living. A century and a half ago India was an industrialized country for its time, especially in textile production, but British competition and even India's trade and tariff policies later destroyed or undermined most of the older industries. This meant that millions of workers had to return to the land, adding to the population dependent on agriculture. The development of new industries in recent decades has not been on a sufficiently large scale to relieve the population pressure on the land. In fact, between 1911 and 1941 the proportion of industrial workmen actually declined in relation to the entire population.

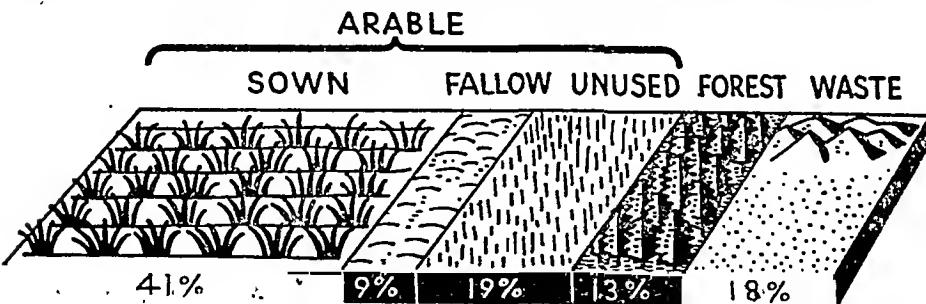
India's land hunger is probably even greater than China's. The amount of cultivated land available to those engaged in agriculture is less than an acre per person. This frequently leads to the conclusion that India has too many people and needs, more than anything else, a curbing of population growth. It is true because of the slowness of India's modern economic development—resulting to an important degree from the lack of full economic independence—the introduction of conditions tending to the birth rate has been retarded. Nevertheless, the average net population growth during the past twenty years has been lower than in England or the United States. The large reduction in India's population pressure will probably take

first of all in the more effective use of existing resources; for here, as in most other impoverished countries, "overpopulation" indicates under-use of resources and maldistribution of existing production. If India some day carries out far-reaching improvements in agriculture and develops a full-fledged modern industry, it will probably be able to support more people than it now has—and at a considerably higher standard of living than the average Indian enjoys today. But this economic modernization will have to be rapid, if its benefits are not to be scattered and lost through a great increase of population resulting from improved conditions.

#### MODERNIZING INDIA'S FARMS

According to official Indian statistics, more than 97,000,000 acres of unused land (apart from current fallow land) were definitely known to be cultivable in 1940-41. If this acreage were brought into production, the crop area would increase considerably. In addition, 89,000,000 acres were classified as not available for cultivation, and it may be assumed that some of these could be used to produce food or other crops, if the proper conditions

## INDIA CAN CULTIVATE MORE LAND



1941 CENSUS FOR BRITISH INDIA ONLY

were present. A demonstration of the possibilities of agriculture in India has been given by two missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Sam Higginbottom, who have taken several hundred badly gullied, eroded acres, many of which were formerly classed as "unculturable waste," and built them up into some of the best yielding land in the country.

It would be incorrect to think that, because he is illiterate, the Indian peasant is unskilled or ignorant of his business. Actually he is a master of the traditional land technique which involves rotation of crops and fallowing. And while he tends to be conservative, his mind is not entirely closed to new methods if he is shown their feasibility. But he is caught in the web of a peculiar set of circumstances. For the traditional techniques, however highly developed, cannot be compared with scientific farming in effectiveness, while scientific farming, even if he knew about it and desired it, is beyond his financial capacity. Since the peasant sees very little cash except for the money he pays in taxes, he is clearly in no position to put out even the smallest sums required for the modernization of agriculture.

It is a great misfortune of Indian farming that the cow dung which accumulates on the land is not used to fertilize the soil, but is burned as fuel after being mixed with straw and dried in the sun. Moreover, large quantities of straw, which could also be used as fertilizer, are consumed by the cattle as fodder. But it would serve no purpose to urge the peasant to use the manure and straw as fertilizer unless he could find the means of paying for the fuel and fodder he would then have to buy. To secure improved agricultural implements he would also need money or credit. At present the average peasant is heavily in debt to the village moneylender and would need aid in getting rid of his current obligations before he could undertake new expenditures.

It would be easy to reach the conclusion that Indian agri-

cultural conditions are hopeless, but this is not the case. The establishment of great irrigation projects by the government, especially in the Punjab and Sind, indicates what could be done if the whole country underwent intensive irrigation. The development of improved varieties of some crops, particularly cotton and sugar cane, and the setting of official standards in grading various Indian products are also significant. But action along these lines is as yet quite limited and does not affect the mass of peasants. Nor has the power of the moneylender—who charges exorbitant interest rates and plays a powerful role in village life—been reduced markedly, despite the rise of agricultural cooperatives and the enactments of various provincial governments.

The average yield of most Indian crops is strikingly low. Yet, according to a statement made by D. R. Sethi, Director of Agricultural Production (Food), Government of India, in January 1945, intensified irrigation could raise production from 50 to 100 per cent; application of plant foods would result in a further increase of from 20 to 30 per cent, especially in cereals, sugar, and vegetables; and improved seeds would help in wheat cultivation. He added, however, that “a radical change in our system of land tenures and system of holdings” would be required to apply scientific knowledge “with a view to producing two blades where only one grows at present.”

### THE LAND SYSTEM

One outmoded feature of the land system is the existence of strip-farming, a practice which was general in Europe centuries ago and is still found in China. Under strip cultivation the peasant's farm consists of a number of separate and scattered strips, instead of being a single plot. It is obvious that this is an uneconomical method of farming, but in old India its effects were

A little less than one-third of the area is under a "temporary *zamindari*" system. This has the same origin as the permanent arrangement already described, but land values are surveyed and taxes reassessed every thirty years. Here there are both landlords and peasant owners. The last type of land tenure is known as the *ryotwari* system from the word *ryot*, meaning peasant. Under the *ryotwari* arrangement, covering a little more than half of British India, the peasant pays land revenue directly to the government. In theory this means that there is no private landlordism in *ryotwari* areas, since the state is the landlord, but in practice *zamindars* are found here, too, since many peasants have sold or lost their land.

Generally speaking, peasant owners in India have tended to lose their land under the burden of taxes, rents, and usurious interest payments. These factors help, in part, to explain why the Indian peasant seems to lack initiative, for he clearly is hemmed in by economic problems that tend to make ambition a futile expenditure of energy. The life he leads and his lack of education also restrict the field of his vision and make it difficult for him to imagine how much could be done with his land if appropriate opportunities existed. In some cases, too, religious beliefs interfere with effective agriculture. For example, since the killing of cattle is against Hindu law, the country is overrun by sickly, underfed cattle. Nevertheless, no mistake should be made about the fact that the main explanation of the peasant's condition lies in the agricultural system. Vigorous national leadership for agrarian reform—today and in the independent India of the future—could do much to create a new type of Indian peasant over the years.

## 6. Modern Industry and City Life

The cities of India are colorful, bustling, overcrowded and dirty—a mixture of the traditional urban life of the country with Western industrialism. Conditions probably are not very different from those prevailing in London or Manchester in the early days of modern industry, but the contrast with Manchester or London today is startling. Calcutta, for example, is a great noisy metropolis, teeming with people and vehicles. It has a huge park, a large residential area for Europeans and wealthy Indians, crowds of rickshaw drivers, many destitute people, and slums. It has its modern industries—jute mills, railway repair shops, machine tool plants, and docks. At the same time, like India's other cities, it faces housing and sanitation problems of which the average American can have no conception. Thousands of people have no toilet facilities except the street, or little ditches which run parallel to the street between the gutter proper and the fronts of the houses.

### INDIAN WORKMEN

Only one out of every ten Indians lives in a city. Those who do represent extremes of wealth and poverty, with a small middle class in between. An average worker's family in Bombay, for example, may consist of five people—two parents and three children—dwelling in a broken-down tenement or a low hut (although in some parts of India factories have built special housing units for their workers). Most workers' families live in a single room, and in a number of cases the room is occupied by two or more families separated by partitions. Illnesses are widespread, and malaria and tuberculosis rates are high.

The workers are largely illiterate. While government schools exist, many children attend classes only occasionally, if at all, since poverty inevitably has the effect of promoting child labor. Before the war a weaver in Bombay might receive from 35 to 60 rupees (roughly \$11.00-\$18.00 in American money) for a working month of 26 days, while a reeler or winder might be paid from 18 to 22 rupees (a little more or less than \$6.00) for the same period. During the war prices far outstripped increases in workers' incomes, and shortages of food and clothing materials were sometimes acute. Yet, despite difficult conditions, the workers of India have an air of independence about them that differs markedly from the obsequious attitude of the servant class.

### LABOR UNIONS

Under conditions of illiteracy, poverty, opposition from employers, and differences of language and religion the establishment of effective unions is difficult. The fact that many Indian workers expect to return to their villages after a while and do not consider themselves permanent city dwellers also affects the strength of the labor movement. Nevertheless, if workers in cottage industry, domestic service, and on plantations are excluded, and only genuine factory industry is considered, the figures for unionization are rather high.

The first unions were formed before World War I, but organized labor did not become influential until 1918. As in China, the Indian labor movement was intimately linked with the movement for national independence. There also has been a strong tendency for Indian labor to follow radical leadership, and the Government of India has sometimes taken action against union leaders on political grounds. The All-India Trade Union Congress, led by S. A. Dange, head of a union of cotton mill workers in Bombay, is usually considered the largest union group in

India. Although it is strongly nationalist, it did not follow Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in opposing the war effort after the failure of the Cripps Mission in 1942. On the contrary, it played an important role in rallying anti-Japanese sentiment and also helped to fight against famine conditions. The Trade Union Congress has been opposed by M. N. Roy's Indian Federation of Labor, but the latter group, which accepted government subsidies during the war, has recently lost both in leaders and membership.

Since Indian labor conditions are far behind those of advanced industrial countries, one of labor's chief problems has been to secure the passage and execution of improved labor laws. Under pre-war regulations children below twelve were forbidden to work in factories, women were not to engage in night or underground work, and the maximum hours in seasonal factories were to be 11 daily and 60 per week, or in year-round factories 10 daily and 54 per week. The seasonal rules are said to have been disregarded frequently, and in any case the enforcement of labor legislation in a large, relatively unindustrialized country is not easy.

### MODERN INDUSTRY

Before the war India was frequently referred to as the world's eighth industrial nation, but the impression created by the statement is misleading, for at best it means no more than that India is the most industrialized of the unindustrialized states. Industries using power-driven machinery and employing more than twenty workers accounted for only 1,751,000 workers in British India in 1939. This was a rise of less than 500,000 from 1922—an increase so small as to indicate that the proportion of the population dependent on industry was declining. In 1939 British India also contained approximately 700,000 railway workers,

300,000 miners, and 300,000 maritime workers and longshoremen. In the Indian states there were about 1,000,000 plantation workers and 250,000 others in "large" industrial establishments.

Factories are located chiefly in or near Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Cawnpore, Jamshedpur, Madras and Sholapur; in 1936 no other city had more than 20,000 factory workers. Industry is distributed very unevenly over the country, partly as a result of the location of natural resources. Textiles, especially cotton and jute, are dominant, and finished cotton goods have expanded greatly in the past quarter of a century. In 1922-23, for example, India produced only 1,725,000,000 yards of cotton piece goods, as compared with 4,013,000,000 yards in 1939-40. Although the figure rose further during the war, hand looms still support five times as many workers as machine looms.

### INDIAN IRON AND STEEL

A second leading industry is the production of iron and steel, for India contains the largest steel works in the British Empire, the Tata Iron and Steel Co., Ltd. This establishment, located at Jamshedpur and employing about 30,000 workers, was built with the aid of American and European experts, but the capital, all Indian, is centered in the Tata family. Although the company is the world's cheapest producer of pig iron, the price of its steel is high because little scrap is available. Before World War II Tata and other Indian plants produced about 750,000 tons of steel. By 1943-44 the figure had risen to 1,250,000 tons, but production at this rate is only a small fraction of the output of any advanced industrial country.

Other Indian industries of importance are sugar refining, hydro-electricity, cement, matches, and paper. India's state-owned railways are also highly significant. During the war production for military purposes expanded in certain lines, but chiefly through a

reduction in the output of consumers' goods. The country is still very backward in turning out heavy machinery and machine tools and does not as yet produce a single internal combustion engine, even though this is the heart of modern industry.

### INDUSTRY STILL IN EARLY STAGE

As might be expected in a newly-industrializing country, India presents contrasts of efficiency and backwardness. When members of an American economic mission visited the Firestone plant in India in 1942, they found it turning out as much per man per machine as the Firestone organization in Akron, Ohio. Three years later the Indian plant was still operating at high efficiency—a result which the management felt had been achieved in large part by seeing to it that the workmen were well fed. On the other hand, in ordinary life methods of work are quite backward by any modern standards. The job of repairing the roof of a house—a matter of three or four days in the United States—may take months, partly because of the inferiority of conveying equipment, paint brushes, ladders, and other apparatus.

Even in the industrial plants much remains to be done. For example, work is sometimes carried out on the ground without even a cement floor, so that machines are exposed to dust from the earth. And men may be seen walking about without shoes while carrying pieces of red-hot metal. All this, to be sure, must be seen in proper perspective, for if India is many years behind the United States industrially, it is probably a generation ahead of China. Yet, in the light of history the industrial progress made by India is only a harbinger of far greater future developments, whose full unfolding depends on the achievement of national independence. For political freedom and freedom to evolve economically go hand in hand.

## 7. Britain and India

Before the British came, India had been conquered many times, but always by peoples who poured through the passes in the northern mountain barrier. These conquerors were in each case absorbed into Indian life so that the country, in effect, remained independent. The British, traveling by sea, were a different kind of invader, for they did not seek to settle in India as a people. Possessing their own country and civilization thousands of miles away, they could not be absorbed, but remained an alien, although highly significant, element in India's development.

### THE WEST ARRIVES

The direct sea route to India from the West was opened by the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama, in 1498, but a hundred years later the heyday of the Portuguese in India was already over. This was an age of piracy in which trade required strong military protection, and the British East India Company, which Queen Elizabeth chartered in 1600, established a group of military-trading posts in India. The first was created at Surat on the west coast in 1612, and others were added later at such places as Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta. For a time the Dutch exerted some influence, but the French East India Company, chartered in 1664, came forward as the only powerful foreign rival of the British. By the 1740's the French and British companies were locked in a commercial and military struggle that was part of a world-wide conflict between the two countries.

The British East India Company was interested at first in spices, gems, silks, and other luxury articles, but soon began to trade in cheaper commodities, such as saltpetre and muslins. New-

found markets in England promoted the growth of Indian industry and the rise of great, prosperous cities, such as Murshidabad and Dacca. For a long time the Company concentrated on trade, but the breakup of India into rival kingdoms after the death of the Mogul emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, gave the English and French an opportunity to expand their power. The next half-century was a period of high intrigue and rivalry, with both foreign companies manipulating native rulers to advance their own aims. It was an age of bribery, duplicity, and sheer plunder, symbolized by the name of Robert Clive of the British East India Company.

#### BRITISH SUPREMACY ESTABLISHED

In a small but very significant battle at Plassey in 1757, the English defeated the Nawab of Bengal and won his rich province for themselves. Three and a half years later a crushing blow to French power in India was struck at Pondichéry; thereafter the French were confined to five trading posts which have remained in their hands to the present day: The British East India Company now became a great governmental power, and Bengal yielded to England an enormous annual tribute which played a great part in furnishing the capital for early English industrialization.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the English defeated a series of Indian rivals, including the Marathas, Gurkhas, and Sikhs, and between 1813 and 1856 the territory controlled by the British in India underwent a tremendous expansion. This was the result not only of conquest, but also of the British policy of claiming the dominions of any Indian ruler who died without leaving direct heirs.

In 1857, as a result of many factors making for discontent, the famous Mutiny broke out among the Company's Indian army. It was put down only with great difficulty, and following it the

political power of the East India Company was completely replaced by that of the British government. India was now in name, as well as in fact, a British possession. The policy of annexation gave way to one of alliance with the remaining Indian states, for the British decided that their position would be strengthened if they made the remaining princes instruments of their authority instead of establishing a single British administration for the entire country.

British power was economic as well as political. Beginning in 1813, Indian exports of textiles to England faced prohibitive tariffs, although products sent from England to India were admitted virtually duty-free. As a result, India lost its leading foreign market for textiles and handicrafts and was forced to become a purchaser of British cotton goods on a large scale. India's flourishing industries now entered a period of decline and many of the great textile centers were depopulated. Population pressure in rural areas grew intense, for—in contrast to Britain's evolution at an earlier period—the decay of India's handicraft economy was not accompanied by the rise of machine industry. It is true that when Britain established free trade in the middle of the nineteenth century tariffs no longer existed on Indian goods, but by that time India's earlier industries were past restoration.

#### HAS INDIA GAINED OR LOST?

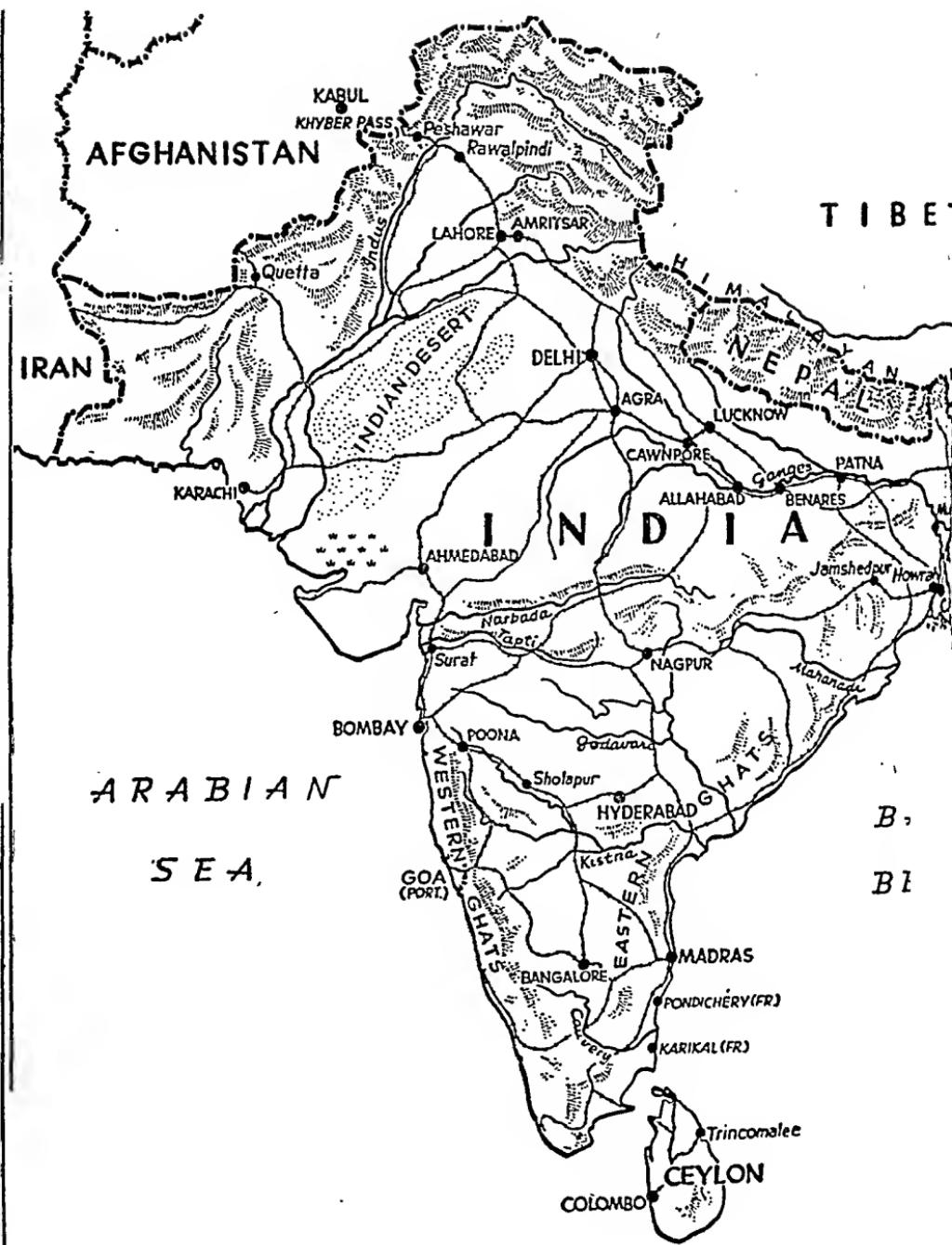
In recent years, there has been much argument as to whether India has benefited or suffered from British rule and whether it has been kept by Britain because it is a source of profit. The British naturally stress what they have accomplished in India and minimize the returns to themselves, while the Indians take the opposite position.

In the British view the past century has seen a number of con-

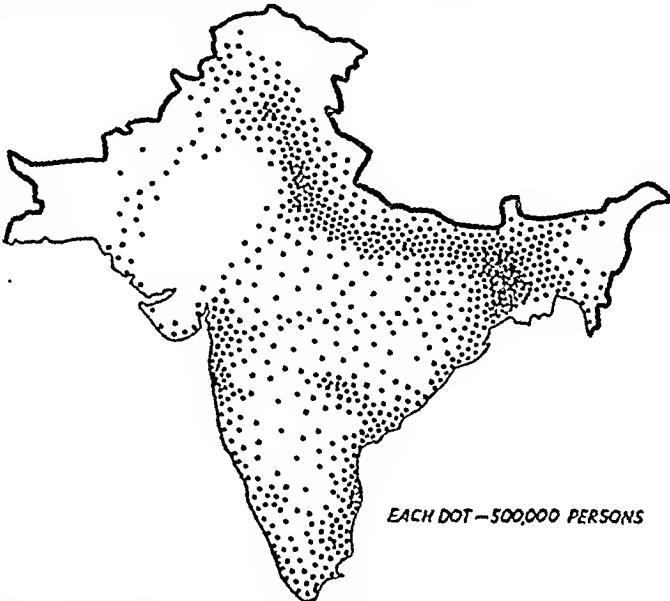
structive economic and political developments in India; for example, the ending of India's civil wars and the creation of a vast area of internal peace. The British also point out that they have built railways, developed irrigation works, promoted an efficient civil service, and introduced Western knowledge into India. At the same time some Westerners maintain that by encouraging the use of the English language as a common medium of communication among the educated class Britain has helped to promote Indian unity, and that many of India's democratic and nationalistic ideas are of British origin.

While not denying that there have been constructive aspects to British rule, Indian nationalists charge that Britain has curbed India's industrialization, encouraged Indian religious and political differences, and acted as a bulwark of backward social conditions—for example, by maintaining the outmoded rule of the Indian princes and an oppressive system of land ownership and taxation. They argue that a dependent India has been used, first of all, to serve Britain's own economic, political, and military interests. And they deny that India's nationalism or spirit of unity is the result of British actions, except in the sense that many Indians have found a common cause in opposing British control.

Undoubtedly India today is an extremely poor country, for its annual national income per person is estimated at 67-70 rupees, i. e., about \$23.00, and a large part of the country is below this average figure. Of the 1941 population of approximately 390,000,000, perhaps 20,000,000 were wealthy or comfortable, 130,000,000 lived under tolerable conditions, and 240,000,000 were poverty-stricken. The life expectancy of the average Indian is about 26 years, as compared with the American life-span of more than twice that length. The Indian death rate—among the highest in the world—was 22 per thousand in 1942, while that of the United States was 10.4.



# DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION



# POLITICAL DIVISIONS (INCLUDING MAIN INDIAN STATES)



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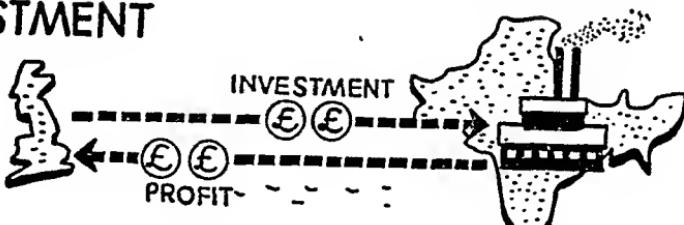
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# BRITAIN'S STAKE IN INDIA TODAY

## ① INVESTMENT



## ② TRADE



## ③ DEFENSE



No one knows what India would be like today if the British had never set foot in it, and Britain cannot be blamed for all the shortcomings of present-day India. Nevertheless, as the paramount power in India for well over a century, Britain cannot escape a large measure of responsibility for India's backwardness. Perhaps one of the main points to consider for the future is that poverty, illiteracy, the caste system, and other problems can hardly be dealt with effectively by a foreign government. The British, in fact, after establishing themselves firmly in India, long ago decided to preserve rather than to change the surviving structure of Indian society, and by their cooperation with the

Indian princes have helped to maintain the status quo. If India is to come to grips with the many serious issues confronting it, an independent Indian government will be required. This does not mean that the existence of an independent regime would in itself guarantee necessary changes, but rather that only such a regime could hope to command enough popular support to adopt far-reaching progressive policies and carry them through.

### PROFIT OR LOSS TO BRITAIN?

The value of India to Britain has altered over the years. Until the 1760's it was largely a market in which British merchants bought large quantities of goods and gave manufactures and bullion in exchange. After the defeat of the French and the winning of Bengal the country became a source of outright tribute and plunder for the East India Company. Still later, in the early nineteenth century, India developed into a great market for the expanding English cotton goods industry. In the latter part of the century British investors began to put their money into Indian government bonds, railways, plantations, and mines—and, more recently, into factory production. Generally speaking, while trade was the major consideration in the early period, investment has become dominant in the past seventy-five years.

India is the heart of the British Empire, for it contains more than three-quarters of its total population and about nine-tenths of its colonial population. Because of its location, manpower, and production, India has been of enormous military significance. During World War I it furnished Britain with approximately 800,000 troops and 400,000 laborers on a voluntary basis, and many served overseas. The Indian government also made large financial contributions toward Britain's war costs, including a gift of £100,000,000; and industrial production—especially the output of Tata steel—meant a great deal to the British forces in the

States—combined. It is very unlikely that the situation would have remained so favorable to Britain if not for Britain's political position in India.

During the war American exports to India rose tremendously because of the huge quantities of lend-lease materials sent to that country. Now that lend-lease is at an end, it remains to be seen whether India will buy a larger volume of American goods than in the pre-war period. This matter is of deep interest to the British because in 1938 India took 7.2 per cent of the total exports of the United Kingdom. This was a rather large figure, since it represented approximately \$165,000,000 and made India the United Kingdom's third most important customer.

It is difficult to tell how much annual profit Britain derives from India, but a few years ago the total was estimated at slightly less than £23,000,000, excluding the money sent home by Englishmen now employed in India, and the profits on trade and shipping. If these missing figures could be added, the sum would be considerably larger. In World War II, of course, British expenditures in India far outweighed any returns received from that country by English investors, traders, and civil servants. But this was an inevitable accompaniment of a struggle in which India was of incalculable military importance for Britain's survival.

It would be wrong to suppose that the British interest in India has been solely a question of profit and military power, but these considerations are of the utmost significance to Britain. The fact that returns from India have fallen in recent years does not mean that India has become unimportant, but should be regarded as a symbol of the serious difficulties Britain confronts abroad. Unquestionably, in facing the demands of Indian nationalists, London is always mindful of the economic, military, and political effects that Indian independence might have on its own position as a world power.

## 8. How Is India Governed?

Politically India is a patchwork in which various stages of the country's modern relations with the West are represented. Even the days of Portuguese power are still suggested by a few coastal areas under Portuguese rule; and the French struggle for control has left its mark in the existence of five French settlements. But these non-British areas are relics of history, small in extent and possessing a total population of little more than a million.

The bulk of the country is divided into two main parts: British India and the Indian States. The former, with 54.7 per cent of the total area and over three-quarters of the population, includes the territories annexed by the East India Company before the Indian Mutiny of 1857. It consists of eleven provinces: Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Northwest Frontier Province, Orissa, Punjab, Sind, and United Provinces. The largest is Madras, and the most highly populated, Bengal, while Sind is the smallest both in size and population. Newspaper articles about India are generally concerned with the provinces of British India, for they form the area of direct British rule and of the strongest Indian demands for independence.

The Indian States are territories that were not annexed by the British. There are 562 of them covering over 700,000 square miles and containing 95,000,000 people in 1941. But the vast majority of the Indian princes are really feudal barons, holding a few square miles of territory with an insignificant population and an annual income that would not even amount to several hundred thousand dollars. The leading state is Hyderabad in Central India, with 16,000,000 people and an annual revenue of over \$30,000,000. Others of top importance are Mysore, Travancore, Kashmir,

the princes usually consult the Political Department before appointing their prime ministers. In general, the British have as much of a direct voice in the Indian States as they require for political control, and no prince would dare to adopt policies against the wishes of the Viceroy. The relations of the states with the government are determined by treaties concluded with Britain many decades ago under conditions prevailing before the rise of modern Indian nationalism.

Although some princes have distinctive, individual titles, a Hindu ruler is usually called a Maharaja, and a Moslem ruler a Nawab. But whether ruled by one or the other, the states as a whole are autocracies, far behind British India in economic and political development. Legislatures exist in about thirty states, but consist largely of appointed members and are usually limited to advisory functions. Civil liberties are sharply restricted even in the advanced states, and the prince holds the welfare of the people almost entirely in his hands. Although many rulers have been fantastically extravagant with the money wrung from their subjects, they are largely immune to pressure from the people because their position is virtually guaranteed by their treaties with Britain.

On the other hand, several states have made great progress in some fields of modern development. Baroda, for example, has free, compulsory, primary education and an excellent public library system. Travancore has the highest literacy rate in all India, and its Maharaja was the first to admit Untouchables to temples. Mysore has also carried out important work in the field of education, irrigation, public services, and industrialization. Other examples might be given, but generally speaking, the states are medieval territories strangely out of keeping with the modern world.

## FEW ENGLISHMEN IN INDIA

It is a striking feature of British rule that so few Englishmen are required to control so vast a territory as India. Before World War II there were less than 100,000 Englishmen in the Indian Army, government, business, and the professions. Of the 1,200 members of the Indian Civil Service, the top administrative force of the country, less than half are British, although they hold the key positions. On the lower levels of administration the percentage of British officials is still smaller. And in the Indian Army the British are a decided minority, although again retaining control of the main positions and military services.

The survival of British power, despite strong nationalist sentiment, seems to be largely the result of shrewd British policies and divisions within the country. Indian nationalists declare that Britain has deliberately promoted differences under a policy of "divide and rule." Official British circles deny the charges. In any case, religious and political conflicts; the presence of the Indian States as a bulwark of British rule; the appointment of educated Indians to attractive civil service positions which give them a stake in the existing government; and the creation of a regular army from elements least affected by nationalist sentiment—these are all factors that give strength to the British position.

## 9. Toward Independence

The rise of nationalism constitutes one of the great mass movements of modern times. A few centuries ago the idea of loyalty to one's country rather than to one's family, community, or ruler was only in its infancy. But since the American and French Revolutions the earth has resounded to the struggle of peoples everywhere to achieve independence and national unity.

Although reflecting India's distinctive history, Indian nationalism is part of the broad movement for independence that has expressed itself so sharply in such widely-separated areas as China, Indonesia, Ethiopia, and Czechoslovakia. Fundamentally the desire of the nationalists is to run their own country without being subject to alien political, economic, or cultural control. In India this desire is heightened by the racial discrimination that has frequently accompanied Western rule in the East, for many millions of Indians from different walks of life feel keenly their social inequality with the British. These factors all help to explain why the nationalist movement embraces varied sections of the population from the Bombay industrialist who wishes to be free to develop his interests without bowing to foreign control, to the Bihar peasant who sees in independence a chance to reduce his rent.

### THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The outstanding political organization is the Indian National Congress, which was established in 1885. Frequently called "Congress" or "the Congress" for short, it should not be confused with a governmental body like the United States Congress, for it is an unofficial political party. When it was launched, the

Congress was an extremely moderate movement controlled by Indians of the upper class, who desired a greater voice in policy-making and the appointment of a larger number of Indians to civil service positions. They emphatically were not seeking independence, but sought rather some type of self-government within the British Empire.

A former British official, A. O. Hume, with the encouragement of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, played an active role in the formation of the Congress as an organization which might temper Indian political discontent. But Lord Curzon, who served as Viceroy from 1899 to 1905, was deeply hostile to the movement and hoped to destroy it. As often happens in such cases, his policy of opposition had the effect of strengthening popular support for the Congress. Indian nationalism was also stimulated by the development of a great Hindu religious revival, the rise of Japan as a power, and the Russian Revolution of 1905. The moderate wing of the Congress, headed by G. K. Gokhale, now faced increasing opposition from the radicals under B. G. Tilak. In 1909, after a period of sharp conflict with the Congress, Britain introduced the Morley-Minto reforms, enlarging the central and provincial legislative councils, granting them increased powers of criticism, and altering the manner of their selection. But the councils remained entirely advisory, and only the moderate members of the Congress were satisfied.

At the outbreak of World War I the British war effort received very wide support in India, and even a pacifist like Gandhi gave it his backing. But the Congress gradually became dissatisfied when political concessions were not forthcoming, and in 1916 Tilak won the party's approval for a program of Home Rule (or *Swaraj*)—the most radical step it had yet taken. In 1917 E. S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, announced a policy of adding to the number of Indian officials and grad-

ually developing "self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." Two years later the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms established the type of Central government still in operation, as well as a rather complicated provincial administrative system which has since been replaced. But these moderate changes did not attract the Congress, especially since they had been accompanied by measures increasing the government's powers of repression. Meanwhile Gandhi had come forward with his ideas of civil disobedience, and had been greeted with enthusiasm. He proposed that Indians undermine the government by peaceful defiance of its authority. Under this strategy, as it developed over the years, the nationalists might hold strikes, attend illegal meetings, boycott British goods, or carry out other measures that would embarrass the government, but always without the use of force. If measures of non-violence were met with force by the government the nationalists were not to resist in any way. They were even to invite the police to arrest them, individually or in groups, so that the jails would overflow and contain no room for new prisoners.

Gandhi's views were based on the theory of pacifism—that if millions of people refuse to do something, whether to support a government or a war, they cannot be made to do so, even though they use no force. The technique of civil disobedience, very similar to the idea of the boycott, was peculiarly suited to Indian conditions because the nationalists were virtually unarmed. Gandhism also appealed to Hindu religious principles which were opposed to the use of force. And it fitted in with the conservative outlook of many wealthy members of the Congress who wished to put pressure on Britain, but feared the effects of unleashing an unrestrained popular movement.

Civil disobedience—known also by such names as "passive

resistance," "non-violence," "non-violent non-cooperation," and "Satyagraha"—swept India in 1919, and acts of violence also occurred. The government countered with repressive measures, and at Amritsar in the Punjab in April 1919, 379 persons were killed and at least 1,200 wounded when troops under General Dyer fired without warning on a prohibited but peaceful meeting. Dyer was later censured by a government committee, but received considerable support from official British circles. The "Amritsar massacre," as his action was called, stirred India more deeply than any event since the Mutiny. Alarmed by the mass upsurge, Gandhi later suspended civil disobedience on the ground that persons who did not believe in it were causing disorders, and persuaded Congress to approve a policy of cooperation with the government. But with popular feeling continuing at high tension, the Congress decided to launch an expanded non-violence campaign in 1920 and 1921. The power of the government was now seriously threatened, and in some places peasants refused to pay rents and taxes. In February 1922 Gandhi abruptly secured the suspension of virtually all activity against the government on the ground that peasants had committed a shocking act of violence in burning down a police station at the village of Chauri Chaura. The effect of Gandhi's action was to throw confusion into the ranks of the Congress at a time when the nationalist movement seemed at its height.

### WHO IS GANDHI?

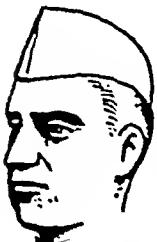
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (known as "the Mahatma," or "Great Soul") is not an easy person to understand. He was born in 1869 in the minor Indian state of Porbandar in which his father and grandfather had served as prime ministers. He studied law in England, practiced in India, and then went to South Africa, where he became the leader of Indian laborers in the

fight against discrimination and first developed his doctrines of passive resistance. When he returned to India in 1914 his main emphasis was on improving the conditions of the Untouchables.

Gandhi is a nationalist leader, but his nationalism is strongly colored by his religious views. His pacifism and asceticism—symbolized by his wearing a simple loin cloth and limiting his diet to such foods as goat's milk and fruits—all have a great appeal, especially to the Hindu peasantry. His emphasis on reviving the old village handicrafts, particularly hand-spinning, also strikes a responsive chord among the people. Western-thinking Indians, who desire highly-developed industries, do not agree with Gandhi's ideas, but many of them support and respect him for his qualities as a leader. They realize that, more than any other man, he has given Indians a nationalist purpose and a sense of self-confidence. Yet many Indians are annoyed by Gandhi's inconsistencies; and particularly among the younger people recognition of his past importance is mingled with the desire for a different type of leadership. Some of Gandhi's inconsistencies arise from the conflict between his religious attitudes and the shrewd realism of his political actions, for he is a keen politician. Like politicians in all countries he also tends to ask for more than he expects to get, a habit which has been confusing to those who take all his statements literally. Yet it is true that he delights in being a paradox and has less hesitation about being inconsistent than does the average political leader. At the same time people who have met him have been impressed by his charm, good humor, and interest in the welfare of others.

#### NEHRU AND OTHER LEADERS

Utterly different from Gandhi except in his spirit of nationalism is Jawaharlal Nehru, who was born in Allahabad in 1889 of a



wealthy Brahman family. Nehru, an intellectual, studied at Harrow and Cambridge and is familiar with the most advanced ideas of the West. Unlike Gandhi, he desires the industrialization of India, is a socialist in his general outlook, and does not believe in pacifism. Aware of the main currents of thought and conflict in the West in a way that Gandhi is not, he emphasizes the community of interest between Indian nationalism and progressive movements elsewhere. But despite their divergencies in temperament and viewpoint, Nehru has followed Gandhi in virtually every crisis, frequently subordinating his own desires because of respect for Gandhi's judgment and fear of disunity within the Congress.

There are many other Congress leaders including men like the Moslem nationalist, Abul Kalam Azad, now President of the Congress, Chakravarti Rajagopalachari of Madras; Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as the "Frontier Gandhi"; and Vallabhbhai Patel, conservative leader of the Congress party machine. Special note should be taken of

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*from top to bottom:*

*Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*

*Jawaharlal Nehru*

*Mohammed Ali Jinnah*

*Mrs. Sarojini Naidu*

two women leaders, Sarojini Naidu and Vijayalakshmi Pandit. Mrs. Naidu, a distinguished poet who has fought against child-marriage and the seclusion of women, was elected President of the Congress in 1925. Mrs. Pandit, a younger sister of Nehru, became the first woman minister in a popular provincial government in 1937.

### THE 1935 CONSTITUTION

During the mid-twenties the nationalist movement was in a state of depression; but the Congress later revived and in 1929 set complete independence as its goal, abandoning the demand for Dominion status. Meanwhile the British government had appointed a commission under Sir John Simon to consider constitutional changes for India. This body visited the country in 1928 and 1929, but the leading Indian parties boycotted it and later rejected its report.

In 1930 the Congress launched a new civil disobedience campaign, again threatening the British position in India. The government carried out far-reaching measures of suppression and arrested many thousands of nationalists, including Gandhi himself. As in 1919-22, Gandhi became uneasy over the development of the conflict in India and, on being released from prison in January 1931, represented the Congress in discussions with the Viceroy, Lord Irwin (now the Earl of Halifax). The resulting Irwin-Gandhi Pact provided for the withdrawal of civil disobedience and participation by the Congress in a conference in England to draw up a Federal Constitution for India. The second of these so-called Round Table Conferences was attended by Gandhi, but it failed and he returned to India. Early in 1932 he was arrested again, and the government took new measures against the Congress.

In 1935, on the basis of the Round Table discussions and other

studies, the British Parliament adopted a new Indian constitution. The federal part of this constitution never went into operation because it was opposed both by the nationalists for the narrowness of its concessions and by the princes out of fear that it might curb their authority in some degree. It was a carefully devised plan, assigning great powers to the Viceroy, including control of defense, foreign affairs, and various financial matters. It also would have restricted the representation of the Hindu majority, while giving the states a voice in government beyond their numerical strength.

The provincial part of the constitution was actually applied and is still in effect (see page 55 for description). Congress was undecided whether to engage in the provincial elections, since it was opposed to the Act of 1935, but finally decided to do so. In 1937 it won a majority in seven provinces, and later in an eighth, thereby indicating that the nationalist position it upheld was in accord with the spirit of the mass of Indian voters. The new Congress ministries, however, were largely under conservative leadership and worked smoothly with the existing Central administration.

#### HOW STRONG IS THE MOSLEM LEAGUE?

Today the Moslem League, founded in 1906 by wealthy Moslems to defend their interests, is the second most important political party in India. For some years during and after World War I the League worked closely with the Congress. In the 1920's the League almost disappeared from sight, but it revived in the thirties. Its leader for many years has been Mohammed Ali Jinnah, a wealthy lawyer, unorthodox Moslem, and shrewd politician. Jinnah was a moderate member of Congress in World War I and a leading supporter of Hindu-Moslem unity, but withdrew from the Congress in 1920 and later completely re-

versed his stand on Hindu-Moslem differences. Today he is untiring in his appeals to Moslems to unite in self-defense against the Hindus, and in his emphasis on developing a distinct Moslem nationalism.

The Congress is unquestionably a far more powerful organization than the Moslem League, for the appeal of Congress is addressed to the whole country, not simply to a single group. In the elections of 1937 the League lacked the strength to win in any of the Moslem provinces, and many Moslem voters chose candidates who belonged to the Congress or were in sympathy with it. But since then the League has built itself up to a point where it is the most important Moslem organization and cannot be disregarded in Indian affairs. Yet it would be an error to think that the League speaks for all Indian Moslems, since some Moslem organizations cooperate with the Congress, and there are Moslems within the latter's ranks. It is also incorrect to suppose that every League member subscribes to all of Jinnah's views on Pakistan, any more than all members of the Congress agree with Gandhi on pacifism. It is possible that Jinnah's intransigence toward the Congress does not truly reflect the outlook of the ordinary League member.

The League charges that government by the Congress would be oppressive to Moslems because the Congress is a Hindu body. It also asserts that Congress neglected Moslem interests while governing in the provinces. The Congress denies these charges, points to its willingness to cooperate with friendly Moslem groups, and declares that it is an all-national body in which the Hindus naturally form a majority, since they are two-thirds of the population. The Congress also points to the fact that its program is one of equality for Moslems, Hindus, and others. Undoubtedly Congress leaders do not wish to oppress the Moslem population. But because a man like Gandhi has been a Hindu

religious figure, as well as an Indian nationalist, the Congress outlook may have seemed to some Moslems to reflect Hindu religious attitudes unduly.

The Congress is opposed to any actions that would have the effect of dividing India. Yet in recent years the League has insisted on the creation of an independent Moslem India, to be known as Pakistan. It would include such provinces and states as the Northwest Frontier Province, Sind, the Punjab, Baluchistan, Bengal, and Assam. Many difficulties stand in the way of such an arrangement—first of all, the fact that the area involved consists of two blocks of territory, in the northwest and northeast—between which predominantly Hindu areas lie. At the same time, the rest of India could hardly consent to the loss of its leading port, Calcutta in Bengal. Moreover, Pakistan would leave large Hindu communities in Moslem territory and significant Moslem groups in Hindu areas. Bengal, for example, is 55 per cent Moslem and 42 per cent Hindu. Since the Moslems are not by any means united on the desirability of Pakistan and the Hindus are solidly opposed to it, incorporating the province in a separate, Moslem India would probably go counter to the desires of a majority of the people of Bengal.

The heart of the problem seems to be that the Indian Moslems are developing an increasing spirit of group consciousness and at the very least require assurances that they would have genuine equality in an independent India. It seems possible that if their right to self-determination were conceded, they would actually wish to exercise it as an autonomous part of a united India.

#### OTHER POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Apart from the Congress and the League, certain other political groups should be noted. The Hindu Mahasabha, for example, is a highly conservative orthodox Hindu organization which sharply

opposes concessions to the Moslems, firmly supports the caste system, and emphasizes the glories of Hindu power in the past. It is a small body, but its anti-Moslem attitude has strengthened the hand of extremists among the Moslems. Various liberals, or moderates, are found in the National Liberal Federation, whose outstanding spokesman is Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The members of this organization, which is backed by Indian industrialists and bankers, are few in numbers, but they are widely respected and have been consulted in times of crisis by both the British and the Congress. In general, the moderates agree with the nationalism of the Congress, although not necessarily with its methods. Their main concern has been to promote compromise between Hindus and Moslems, and between Indians in general and the government, on some immediate practical basis. Still another group consists of the followers of B. R. Ambedkar, an Untouchable leader, who opposes the Congress. A second organization of Untouchables—the All-India Depressed Classes League—supports the Congress position.

Another political group is the so-called "Forward Bloc," consisting of the followers of Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose, a former Mayor of Calcutta and Congress President, left India during World War II, went to Germany and Japan, and finally headed an Indian puppet government at Japanese-held Singapore. He was the only important nationalist leader to join the Axis.

India has a Communist Party, which was illegal for eight years until the government lifted the ban on it in 1942. The Communists, led by P. C. Joshi, have been active in the peasant and labor movements. The All-India Trade Union Congress (already described on pp. 38-39) is important politically and stands for swift and complete independence, as well as for improvements in the position of labor. The All-India Kisan Sabha (or Peasants' Union) is a comparable rural organization, which was established

in 1936 at a conference of 20,000 peasants, and now claims over 1,000,000 members. Through independence, the Kisan Sabha seeks the abolition of the *zamindari* system, cancellation of past debts, a widespread system of government credit, and the granting of land to landless peasants. The organization also has the immediate goal of reducing rents, lowering water and interest rates, abolishing forced labor, and establishing free, compulsory education for all children. Many members of the Trade Union Congress and Kisan Sabha also belong to the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League.

## 10. India in World War II

It required no prophet to predict that in World War II Indian nationalists would make more vigorous demands than they had in World War I. The new conflict of 1939 had immediate repercussions, for the British war declaration automatically took India into the struggle, without consultation by the Viceroy of Indian popular representatives. At the same time Parliament quickly gave the Government of India extraordinary emergency powers.

### BRITAIN VS. THE CONGRESS

At the outset the general sympathy of Indian leaders was with Britain and its Allies. Much as the nationalists disliked British colonial policy, they regarded Nazism and Fascism as greater threats. The Indian National Congress had been sharply critical of Prime Minister Chamberlain's appeasement policies and had expressed strong support of Ethiopia, China, Czechoslovakia, and other victims of aggression. In fact, Nehru was in Chungking on a good will mission on the eve of the German invasion of Poland.

But policy toward the Axis danger could not be divorced from the issue of India's future: in September 1939 the Congress Working Committee declared that the war could be supported only if it was a war for India's freedom and not simply for the *status quo*. Britain was asked to state its position. In October the Viceroy proposed the creation of a consultative body, representing the princes, parties, and religious groups, to advise on the conduct of the war. It was also suggested that Britain would increase the Indian group in the Executive Council, if the Moslem League and the Congress could agree. Congress replied by ordering its provincial ministers to resign on the ground that the offer

was unsatisfactory; in most of the provinces the British Governor assumed direct control of the administration.

In March 1940, the Congress announced that to win full independence, it would take all necessary measures, possibly including renewed mass civil disobedience but the invasion of the Low Countries and France caused both Gandhi and Nehru to declare that they would not launch non-violence at so critical an hour for Britain. In July the Congress Working Committee asked for armed defense of India and stated publicly that it could not "go the full length" with Gandhi in urging a pacifist policy in international affairs. An offer was made to cooperate with Britain in the defense of India, if a National Government were formed and a date set for independence. In August, the Viceroy issued a new statement, whose terms were no more satisfactory to the Congress than were those of October 1939.

Congress now withdrew its offer of military cooperation, and Gandhi once more assumed full leadership. But instead of advocating mass civil disobedience, he proposed individual acts of protest by Congressmen, who were to notify the police in advance. This program of limited civil disobedience began in October 1940, and in the course of the following year Nehru and thousands of other nationalist leaders were imprisoned. Rarely, if ever, has a political movement so freely deprived itself of vital leadership. The embarrassing effects on Britain were negligible, and before long a spirit of disillusionment and futility began to pervade the ranks of the Congress.

#### GROWTH OF THE MOSLEM LEAGUE

Meanwhile the Moslem League had increased its strength. At the outbreak of war the League declared its support of Britain, but on the condition that no constitutional step be taken without League approval. At many points thereafter the Viceroy took the

position that Britain could do little about India's political progress, unless the League and Congress first reached an agreement. This had the effect of bolstering the League's prestige, since it had been given, in effect, a veto power over future developments. The extreme attitude sometimes adopted by Jinnah seemed to be encouraged by the Government's use of the League as a counter-balance to the Congress.

In March 1941 the moderates, led by Sapru, asked that the entire Executive Council consist of non-official Indians and that it be treated in the same way as a Dominion government; but Leopold S. Amery, then Secretary of State for India, rejected this proposal as unworkable. Later the Viceroy established a consultative National Defense Council and appointed five non-official Indians to the Executive Council, producing a non-official majority for the first time. British members continued to hold the key posts of Finance, Defense, and the Home Department.

### THREAT OF JAPANESE INVASION

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union and the growing danger from Japan caused alarm both in India and Britain. On December 4, 1941, three days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Nehru was freed as part of a general release of civil disobedience prisoners. He at once stated that "the progressive forces of the world are now aligned with the group represented by Russia, Britain, America, and China." Since the Congress was again turning away from the doctrine of pacifism, Gandhi resigned from the leadership in January 1942.

At this time, when the Western empires in Southeast Asia were crumbling, there was a great outcry in Britain and the other United Nations against the hollowness of the existing colonial system. People asked themselves whether India would not also be lost to the Japanese. Intense political activity now developed

among the Indian parties, for all sensed that great decisions were in the air and understood that the political pattern for years to come might be shaped at this moment.

Within the Congress conflicting trends of thought appeared. Gandhi wanted the policy of non-cooperation with Britain to continue. Rajagopalachari held that constitutional questions could wait until after the war and that the important thing was to cooperate with Britain, if a National Government were formed in India. Nehru took a middle position, perhaps typical of Congress sentiment—that, although India sympathized with Britain, only a free India could undertake defense on a national basis.

The Moslem League warned against any moves which would prejudice the right to Pakistan, but showed interest in having a genuine share in government assigned to Indian leaders. The moderates headed by Sapru asked that the Executive Council become a National Government, representing the various Indian groups and responsible only to the Crown. In February Chiang Kai-shek and Mme. Chiang flew to India, and the Generalissimo publicly urged Britain to give the Indians "real political power," so that they might participate fully in the war. This was an expression of the deep concern and bitterness felt in China over British colonial policy after the catastrophe in Southeast Asia. There was also considerable pressure within Britain and the United States for a new offer to India, and on March 11—three days after the fall of Rangoon, the capital of Burma—Prime Minister Churchill announced that Sir Stafford Cripps would carry certain British Cabinet proposals to India for discussion with Indian leaders.

#### THE CRIPPS MISSION

The Cripps proposals promised "the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the

United Kingdom and other Dominions by a majority of two-thirds in the Council, but gave to them in every respect the same rights and franchises in any aspect of its function or record. The first step to establish a constituent assembly had been to send directly-elected delegates of the provinces and append their representatives of the Indian States, etc. to be seated in the Council after the creation of the Union. No province or state would be obliged to join the Indian Union if it did not desire to do so, and non-seceding provinces might, if they wished, draw up their own constitution and have the same status as the Union. Then the constitution-making body were also to be given full power covering questions arising out of the transfer of power to India and providing for the protection of racial and religious minorities.

With regard to military problems, British officials' idea of the defense of India were to continue, but the full organization of India's "military, naval, and financial resources" was to rest on the Government of India "with the co-operation of the people of India." The latter phrase was further defined in the following sentence: "The Majesty's Government does not invite the immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the creation of the Union of the Commonwealth, and of the United Nations. But they will be enabled to give their vital and concerted support to the progress of a task which is vital in the interest of the future freedom of India."

The most important immediate source of the power of the British Government by the Viceregal Decree of 1935 was the control entirely British and well represented by the British group in India. But the fact that the Viceroy, as the representative of the Viceregal, ruled that he was bound to "make every provision and take all the steps necessary for the safety of the Government of India and the safety of the Indian Empire."

Indian Defense Member of the Executive Council. Many objections also were raised against the British constitutional proposals on the ground that they were undemocratic and would encourage Indian disunity. But it was on the issue of the immediate transfer of power that the conferences broke down.

### FAILURE OF THE PROPOSALS

Congress, as represented by Nehru and its President, Azad, did not deny the necessity of Britain's retaining control of purely military affairs, but wished a large degree of subordinate responsibility for defense to be assigned to Indians. The British were willing to appoint to the Executive Council an Indian Defense Member with extremely limited powers, but argued that drastic immediate changes in military responsibility would seriously disturb the war effort. The Congress, however, held that in view of the long bitterness in British-Indian relations, the people could not be rallied adequately for the war unless Indians received genuine power.

This difference in viewpoint proved even more crucial in the discussion of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Cripps maintained that an appointed Executive Council not subject to the Viceroy's veto would be responsible to no one and would be unacceptable to the Indian minorities. Congress took the contrary position, that "the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full power, and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council."

Cripps held discussions with representatives of the Congress, Moslem League, Hindu Mahasabha, Sikhs, Liberals, Untouchables, and Princes, as well as with various prominent individuals, British and Indian. The British proposals were ultimately rejected by the Congress, League, Mahasabha, Sikh All-Parties Committee, and Untouchables. The Liberals gave qualified approval,

and the Princes were non-committal. The decision really lay with the Congress as the most important organization, and there is little doubt that if it had accepted, other leading groups would have followed. The Moslem League, for example, waited until the Congress had decided to reject before making up its own mind. While not wholly satisfied with the Cripps proposals, the League was pleased because Britain had recognized the possibility that an independent India might be divided into more than one Union.

Looking back at the Cripps Mission, it is now clearer than ever how much the general conditions of the period had to do with the failure to reach agreement. Although the nationalists found the British plan defective in many respects, perhaps its greatest weakness in their eyes was that it offered only limited immediate concessions at a time when Britain was threatened by military disaster in the East. Had the Cripps proposals been drafted in the fall of 1939, when British power was untouched, the effect in India probably would have been electric. In the early part of 1942, however, the Congress was skeptical as to how long British rule might last. This consideration was heightened by the long-standing suspicion between Britain and the nationalists and by the marked conservatism shown in presenting the proposals—for example, the complete absence of words like “National Government” and “independence.”

#### CONFLICT AFTER CRIPPS

After rejecting the offer from London the Congress leaders faced difficult decisions. Britain's position was that the Cripps plan was still open for acceptance and that no new proposals would be made during the war. Within the Congress Gandhi's viewpoint gradually won out. Men like Rajagopalachari, Nehru, and Azad wanted to organize full Indian resistance against a pos-

sible Japanese invasion, but the means did not seem to be at hand. Rajagopalachari, who believed that the Congress should make some concessions to the Moslem League in order to secure cooperation between Congress and the League, now resigned from the Congress Working Committee in order to propagate his views. But other leaders who questioned the trend of Congress policy suppressed their doubts to preserve the unity of the organization.

Gandhi soon demanded that Britain "quit India" at once, but later felt obliged to backtrack somewhat from this position. On August 8 the All-India Congress Committee demanded that Britain withdraw from India. The resolution stated that a declaration of India's independence would be followed by the formation of an all-party Provisional Government which would join the United Nations. Gandhi was authorized to lead a new mass civil disobedience movement if the Congress demands were refused, but no date was set; an appeal to world opinion was to be made first, while Gandhi announced that he would write a letter to the Viceroy. On August 9 the Government of India moved suddenly and swiftly, arresting Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, and many other Congress leaders.

Violence now broke out in India, and there were many attacks on police stations and railway lines. The British regarded these actions, as well as a number of strikes that occurred, as evidence of a carefully-laid Congress plan, but nationalist sources claimed that they were spontaneous outbreaks. By the end of 1942, 60,000 Indians had been arrested, 940 killed, and 1,630 wounded. Churchill took the position that the Congress was working with a Japanese fifth column, and efforts were made to suggest that Gandhi was pro-Japanese. But Indians of various groups, including the League, Mahasabha, and Moderates, sharply rejected these suggestions and asked for the release of the

leaders. The British held that nothing further could be done in India until Congress and the League came together and Congress revoked its resolution on civil disobedience. But as long as the nationalist leaders remained in detention and were unable to consult each other, it was difficult to see how either of these developments could take place. Moreover, the Congress itself had been declared illegal.

In May 1944 Gandhi was released from detention on medical grounds, and in September he and Jinnah held conversations on Hindu-Moslem relations. The talks failed. Gandhi was willing, although reluctantly, to allow a plebiscite on Pakistan in the predominantly Moslem provinces after independence, but Jinnah considered this insufficient and wanted Pakistan to be conceded in advance as a right of the Moslem population. The necessity of a Congress-League agreement was becoming increasingly apparent in India, and in the spring of 1945 Bhulabhai Desai and Liaquat Ali Khan, leaders respectively of the Congress and the League in the Central Legislative Assembly, agreed on a plan for a new central government in which each group would have 40 per cent of the seats, while 20 per cent would be held by the smaller minorities.

### A NEW PROPOSAL

In June 1945 Britain issued a White Paper, known as the "Wavell Plan" (after the Viceroy, Archibald P. Wavell). It provided that during the period until the Indian groups reached agreement on India's political future, the Viceroy's Executive Council would be altered to include representatives of the leading Indian groups. Various Indian leaders were to meet and recommend to the Viceroy a list of members for the new Executive Council, although he was to remain free to choose any persons he desired. Indians were to fill all Council posts except those of

Viceroy and War Member (held by the Commander-in-Chief), and the main Indian groups were to be represented in balanced fashion, with equal numbers of Moslems and caste Hindus. Simultaneously with the announcement of the plan, eight members of the Congress Working Committee, including Nehru, were released.

The proposed conference opened at Simla late in June, but failed because Jinnah insisted that the Moslem League name all the Moslem members. This was unacceptable to the Viceroy as well as to the Congress, which held that the League did not, in fact, represent all Indian Moslems. The breakdown might have been averted, however, if the Wavell Plan had offered equal representation to the League and the Congress rather than to Moslems and caste Hindus. In the former case the Congress would have been free to name a Moslem as a member of its delegation, and the League would still have had numerical equality with the Congress.

Today the impasse in India continues. Whether the victory of the Labor Government will bring significant changes in British policy it is difficult to say, but it is worth noting that both the Cripps proposals and the Wavell Plan were approved by the Labor members of the Churchill Cabinet. The next step, as announced late in the summer, was to be the holding of provincial and central elections, so that the existing state of Indian public opinion might be determined. On September 19, 1945, Prime Minister Attlee and Viscount Wavell issued statements on India's political future. It was announced that after the elections and prior to the holding of a constitution-making body, the Viceroy would meet with representatives of the provincial legislative assemblies to discuss whether the constitutional provisions of the Cripps proposals were satisfactory, or whether an

alternative or modified scheme should be adopted. After the elections the Viceroy was also to take steps to establish an Executive Council having the support of the main Indian parties.

### WARTIME ECONOMIC LIFE

Although India is usually discussed in political terms, economic developments should not be overlooked. It is a significant fact that India's industrial production reached its peak in 1941 before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It is true that thereafter increases occurred in the output of various war items, but this expansion was counterbalanced by a decline in the production of consumers' goods. While this was going on, India paid off most of its sterling debt and actually became a large creditor of Britain, as a result of British war purchases in the country. But since this drain on Indian resources was not adequately matched by imports, the effect was to increase India's problems of livelihood. Moreover, there is no indication that India will be able to use its new sterling assets for purposes other than those that are acceptable to British financial and commercial interests.

As a result of the stringency in imports and the diversion of existing industry from civilian to military purposes, the Indian people faced serious economic difficulties. Shortages, especially of rice and clothing materials, were accompanied by inflationary price increases. 1943 was a year of severe famine, particularly in Bengal, where millions died, either directly of starvation or indirectly through disease caused by malnutrition. The famine reflected the loss of rice imports from Japanese-occupied Burma, the inadequacy of the railway system, the withholding of goods by hoarders, the rise in prices, and the failure of the Central and provincial governments to undertake effective counter-measures in time.

## GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

At the beginning of 1944 a group of leading Indian industrialists issued what became known as the "Bombay Plan." This was a scheme for the rapid modernization and industrialization of the country after the war, with the aid of Indian and foreign capital. Within a period of fifteen years the national income was to be tripled. Industrial production was to be five times that of 1931-32, agricultural production 1.3 times, and services twice as great, while the share of industry in the national income was to rise to 35 per cent. The result was to be the development of an industrially powerful country, with great basic industries. The necessary capital of \$30,000,000,000 for this scheme was to come from a variety of sources, including hoarded wealth, sterling securities, a favorable balance of trade, foreign loans, domestic savings and "created money." The plan aroused intense discussion in India, where it set before the nation a picture of the industrial power India was capable of achieving, given the proper conditions. At the same time there was much criticism of the Bombay proposals on the ground that the "created money" might cause inflation and that the plan did not pay sufficient attention to a fair distribution of the national income, agrarian reform, or the need for national independence as a prerequisite for modern economic development. Subsequently the sponsors of the Bombay Plan issued a second part, which was more precise in dealing with agrarian questions and the problem of distributing wealth equitably.

In August 1944 Sir Ardesir Dalal, one of the co-authors of the Bombay Plan, became the head of a new Department of Planning and Development at the invitation of the Government of India. In April 1945 his Department outlined a proposed policy for the industrialization of the country, involving central control of basic industries and state aid to industry. At the same

time both the Central and provincial governments were turning their attention to planning in other fields. For example, under the Sargent Plan, the Government of India proposed the development of an elaborate system of universal, primary education. And the government of Bengal announced a five-year reconstruction project which would include the initiation of steps directed toward the liquidation of the "permanent *zamindari*" system (see p. 49). In connection with all these proposals, however, the problem of raising the necessary funds, as well as the difficulty of an alien government's executing fundamental changes in the structure of Indian life, loom large.

### THE PROBLEM OF INDIA

The future of India is linked intimately with some of the leading issues of our times—the demand of colonial peoples for national independence, the industrialization of economically underdeveloped areas, the alteration in the international position of the British Empire, and the role that Americans are to play in the world as it exists after the Second World War. The United States, with its growing interest in foreign markets, undoubtedly will wish to sell increasingly to Indian customers—a hope which may be realized if Indian industrialization becomes a reality. But beyond all economic considerations, India is of concern to us because the Indians, 400,000,000 strong, are one of the world's great peoples—a people who, regardless of the difficulties, will play an ever-growing role in the years ahead. It is not too much to suggest that just as the necessity of friendship with Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and France has been stressed by the events of recent years, so our relationship to the Indian people may be of no small consequence in the preservation of the peace.

## DOCUMENTARY APPENDIX

### The Cripps Proposals

*Draft Proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps, released to the press at Delhi, India, March 29, 1942:*

His Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.

His Majesty's Government therefore make the following declaration:

- (a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
- (b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the constitution-making body.
- (c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to:
  - (i) the right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to

retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution, giving them the same full status as the Indian Union, and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

(ii) the signing of a Treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands; it will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities; but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship to the other Member States of the British Commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities: Immediately upon the result being known of the provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures shall,

as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the electoral college. Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

- (e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

## Congress Answer to Cripps Proposals

*Reply of the Congress Party to the Draft Proposals presented by Sir Stafford Cripps. Published on April 11, 1942:*

The working committee have given full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet with regard to India and the elucidation of them by Sir Stafford Cripps.

These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

The Congress has repeatedly stated ever since the commencement of the war in September, 1939, that the people of India would line themselves up with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked that the necessary conditions to enable them to do so be created. The essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realization of present freedom could light the flame which would illuminate millions of hearts and move them to action.

At the last meeting of the All-India Congress Committee after commencement of war in the Pacific it was stated that: "Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defense of the country on a national basis and be able to help in furtherance of larger causes that are emerging from the war."

The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon cessation of hostilities. The committee, while recognizing that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is

fettered and circumscribed and that certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united national government and the establishment of a democratic State.

Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people's right of self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements.

The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence, and Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation. The committee recognize that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion.

The complete ignoring of the 90,000,000 people in the Indian States and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation both of democracy and self-determination. While the representation of an Indian State in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the State have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken.

Such States may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom. Enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces, it has been stated, would be a likely contingency, would be a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the States as well as of the rest of India.

Acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble

in the provinces and lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian States merging themselves into an Indian union.

Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity, and any break of that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate.

Nevertheless, the committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian union against their declared and established will. While recognizing this principle, the committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life.

Acceptance of this principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which would result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the union consistent with a strong national State.

The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of union, and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and good-will are most needed. This proposal has been made presumably to meet communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead to politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among the different communities and create trouble and divert public attention from vital issues before the country.

Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis it is the present that counts and even proposals for the future in so far as they affect the present.

The committee necessarily attached greatest importance to this aspect of the question and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance. For this the present British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and there would appear to be no vital changes in the present structure contemplated.

It has been made clear that the defense of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defense is a vital subject. During wartime it is all-important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration. To take away defense from the sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and nullity and make it perfectly clear that India is not going to function as a free and independent government during pendency of the war.

The committee would repeat that an essential, fundamental prerequisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present is their realization as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom.

What is most wanted is an enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defense. It is only thus that even in this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanize the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion.

It is manifest that the present government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defense. It is only the people of India through their popular representatives who can shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom and full responsibility being cast upon them.

The committee are, therefore, unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet.

counsels of their country, Commonwealth and the United Nations. The committee are, therefore, unable to express an opinion until the complete picture is available.

Another reason why the committee are unable to express an opinion of the interim arrangement for participation in counsels of the country is that Sir Stafford Cripps made it clear that the scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole, and that it will not be possible to retain only the part relating to immediate arrangements at the center and discard the rest of the draft scheme, and as the committee has come to the conclusion that the proposals for the future are unacceptable it will serve no useful purpose to deal further with the question of immediate arrangements.

## **Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee**

*Text of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on August 8, 1942:*

The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad.

The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution, and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India.

and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defense of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathize with the victims of aggression to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure.

It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and Colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method.

The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism, and Imperialism.

This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India

in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism, and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of the United Nations. . . .

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.-I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India.

On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed, and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom.

The provisional government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India.

Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, and to promote the well being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong.

The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units.

The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran, and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other Colonial power.

While the A.-I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defense of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security, and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would insure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all.

On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies, and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defense force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step toward world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need.

The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defense of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.-I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavoring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity.

The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji, and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom.

They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement.

A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committees can function. When this happens, every man or woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued.

Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide, urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.-I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.-I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. This power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

## The Phillips Letters

*Letters to the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt from his personal representative in India, Ambassador William Phillips:*

March 3, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

Gandhi has successfully completed his fast, and the only result of it has been increasing bitterness against the British from large sections of the people. The Government has handled the case from the legalist point of view. Gandhi is the "enemy" and must not be allowed to escape from his just punishment, and at all cost British prestige must be maintained. Indians look at it from a different angle. Gandhi's followers regard him as semidivine and worship him. Millions who are not his followers look upon him as the foremost Indian of the day and feel that, since he has never had an opportunity to defend himself, it is a case of persecution of an old man who has suffered much for the cause which every Indian has at heart—freedom for India. And so presumably Gandhi comes out of the struggle with an enhanced reputation as a moral force.

The general situation as I see it today is as follows: From the British viewpoint their position is not unreasonable. They have been in India for 150 years and, except for the mutiny of 1857, generally speaking, internal peace has been maintained. They

have acquired vast vested interests in the country and fear that their withdrawal from India would jeopardize those interests. The great cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras have been built up largely through their initiative. They have guaranteed the regime of the Princes, who control territorially about one-third of the country and one-fourth of the population. They realize that new forces are gathering throughout the world which affect their hold over India, and they have therefore gone out of their way, so they believe, to offer freedom to India as soon as there are signs that the Indians themselves can form a secure government. This the Indian leaders have been unable to do and the British feel that they have done all that they can in the circumstances. Behind the door is Mr. Churchill, who gives the impression that personally he would prefer not to transfer any power to an Indian government before or after the war and that the status quo should be maintained.

The Indians, on the other hand, are caught in the new idea which is sweeping over the world, of freedom for oppressed peoples. The Atlantic Charter has given the movement great impetus. Your speeches have given encouragement. There is thus a complete deadlock, and I should imagine that the Viceroy and Churchill are well satisfied to let the deadlock remain as long as possible. That is, at least, the general impression in most Indian circles. The problem, therefore, is: can anything be done to break this deadlock through our help? It seems to me that all we can do is to try and induce the Indian political leaders to meet together and discuss the form of government which they regard as applicable to India, and thus to show that they have sufficient intelligence to tackle the problem.

We cannot suppose that the British Government can or will transfer power to India by the scratch of a pen at the conclusion of the peace conference unless there is an Indian Government

fit to receive it. The question remains, therefore, how to induce the leaders to begin now to prepare for their future responsibilities. There is, perhaps, a way out of the deadlock which I suggest to you, not because I am sure of its success, but because I think it is worthy of your consideration.

With the approval and blessing of the British Government, an invitation could be addressed to the leaders of all Indian political groups, on behalf of the President of the United States, to meet together to discuss plans for the future. The assembly could be presided over by an American who could exercise influence in harmonizing the endless divisions of caste, religion, race, and political views. The conference might well be under the patronage of the King Emperor, the President of the United States, the President of the Soviet Union, and Chiang Kai-shek, in order to bring pressure to bear on Indian politicians. Upon the issuance of the invitations, the King Emperor could give a fresh assurance of the intention of the British Government to transfer power to India upon a certain date as well as his desire to grant a provisional set-up for the duration. The conference could be held in any city in India except Delhi.

American chairmanship would have the advantage, not only of expressing the interest of America in the future independence of India, but would also be a guarantee to the Indians of the British offer of independence. This is an important point because, as I have already said in previous letters, British promises in this regard are no longer believed. If either of the principal parties refused to attend the conference, it would be notice to all the world that India was not ready for self-government, and I doubt whether a political leader would put himself in such a position. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Amery may be obstacles, for, notwithstanding statements to the contrary, India is governed from London, down to the smallest details.

Should you approve the general idea and care to consult Churchill, he might reply that, since the Congress leaders are in jail, a meeting such as is contemplated is impossible. The answer could be that certain of the leaders, notably Gandhi, might be freed unconditionally in order to attend the conference. The British may even be searching for a good excuse to release Gandhi, for the struggle between him and the Viceroy is over, with honors for both—the Viceroy has maintained his prestige; Gandhi has carried out his protest against the Government by his successful fast, and has come back into the limelight.

There is nothing new in my suggestion except the method of approach to the problem. The British have already announced their willingness to grant freedom to India after the war, if the Indians have agreed among themselves as to its form. The Indians say they cannot agree because they have no confidence in the British promises. The proposed plan perhaps provides the guarantee required by the Indians, and is in line with British declared intentions. Possibly this is a way out of the impasse which, if allowed to continue, may affect our conduct of the war in this part of the world and our future relations with colored races. It may not be successful, but, at least, America will have taken a step in furthering the ideals of the Atlantic Charter.

Sincerely yours,  
(signed) WILLIAM PHILLIPS

May 14, 1943

Dear Mr. President:

May I add a few words to what I said to you on Thursday afternoon when I had the pleasure of giving you an oral report on my impressions of the Indian situation.

Assuming that India is known to be an important base for our future operations against Burma and Japan, it would seem

to be of highest importance that we should have around us a sympathetic India rather than an indifferent and possibly a hostile India. It would appear that we will have the prime responsibility in the conduct of the war against Japan. There is no evidence that the British intend to do more than give token assistance. If that is so, then the conditions surrounding our base in India become of vital importance.

At present, the Indian people are at war only in a legal sense, as for various reasons the British Government declared India in the conflict without the formality of consulting Indian leaders or even the Indian Legislature. Indians feel they have no voice in the Government and therefore no responsibility in the conduct of the war. They feel that they have nothing to fight for, as they are convinced that the professed war aims of the United Nations do not apply to them.

The British Prime Minister, in fact, has stated that the provisions of the Atlantic Charter are not applicable to India, and it is not unnatural therefore that Indian leaders are beginning to wonder whether the charter is only for the benefit of white races. The present Indian army is purely mercenary and only that part of it which is drawn from the martial races has been tried in actual warfare and these martial soldiers represent only 33 per cent of the army.

General Stilwell has expressed his concern over the situation and in particular in regard to the poor morale of the Indian officers. The attitude of the general public toward the war is even worse. Lassitude and indifference and bitterness have increased as a result of the famine conditions, the growing high cost of living, and continued political deadlock. While India is broken politically into various parties and groups, all have one object in common—eventual freedom and independence from British domination.

There would seem to be only one remedy to this highly unsatisfactory situation in which we are unfortunately but nevertheless seriously involved, and that is to change the attitude of the people of India toward the war, make them feel that we want them to assume responsibilities to the United Nations and are prepared to give them facilities for doing so, and that the voice of India will play an important part in the reconstruction of the world. The present political conditions do not permit of any improvement in this respect.

Even though the British should fail again, it is high time that they should make an effort to improve conditions and re-establish confidence among the Indian people that their future independence is to be granted. Words are of no avail. They only aggravate the present situation. It is time for the British to act. This they can do by a solemn declaration from the King Emperor that India will achieve her independence at a specific date after the war, and, as a guarantee of good faith in this respect, a provisional representative coalition government will be re-established at the center and limited powers transferred to it.

I feel strongly, Mr. President, that in view of our military position in India, we should have a voice in these matters. It is not right for the British to say this is none of your business when we alone presumably will have the major part to play in the struggle with Japan. If we do nothing and merely accept the British point of view that conditions in India are none of our business, then we must be prepared for various serious consequences in the internal situation in India which may develop as a result of the despair and misery and anti-white sentiments of hundreds of millions of subject people.

The peoples of Asia—and I am supported in the opinion by other diplomatic and military observers—cynically regard this war as one between fascist and imperialist powers. A generous

British gesture to India would change this undesirable political atmosphere. India itself might then be expected more positively to support our war effort against Japan. China, which regards the Anglo-American bloc with misgivings and mistrust, might then be assured that we are in truth fighting for a better world. And the colonial people conquered by the Japanese might hopefully feel that they have something better to look forward to than simply a return to their old masters.

Such a gesture, Mr. President, will produce not only a tremendous psychological stimulus to flagging morale throughout Asia and facilitate our military operations in that theater, but it will also be proof positive to all peoples—our own and the British included—that this is not a war of power politics, but a war for all we say it is.

Sincerely yours,  
(signed) WILLIAM PHILLIPS

## **Prime Minister Attlee's Statement of Policy**

*Clement Attlee, British Prime Minister, in a broadcast from London, September 19, 1945 (Text):*

The King's speech at the opening of the new Parliament contained this passage:

"In accordance with the promises already made to my Indian peoples, my Government will do their utmost to promote, in conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, the early realization of full self-government in India."

Immediately after assuming office, the Government turned its attention to Indian affairs and invited the Viceroy to come home in order to review with him the whole situation, economic and

political. These discussions have now concluded and the Viceroy has returned to India and has made an announcement of policy.

You will remember that in 1942 the Coalition Government made a draft Declaration for discussion with Indian leaders, commonly known as the Cripps offer. It was proposed that, immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps should be taken to set up in India an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India. Sir Stafford Cripps took that offer to India, but it was unfortunately not accepted by the leaders of the Indian political parties; the Government is, however, acting in accordance with its spirit and intention.

The first step necessary is to get, as soon as may be, as democratic a representation of the Indian peoples as possible. The war has in India, as in this country, prevented elections being held for a long time, and the Central and Provincial Legislatures must now be renewed. Therefore, as has already been announced, elections will be held in India in the coming cold weather. The electoral rolls are being revised as completely as time permits, and everything possible will be done to ensure a free and fair election. The Viceroy has today made known our intention to follow their election by positive steps to set up a Constituent Assembly of Indian representatives, charged with the task of framing a new constitution. The Government has authorized Lord Wavell to undertake preliminary discussions with representatives of the new Provincial Legislatures as soon as they are elected, to ascertain whether the proposals of the Cripps offer are acceptable as they stand, or whether some alternative or modified scheme would be preferable. Discussions will also take place with the representatives of the Indian States.

The Government has further authorized the Viceroy, as an interim measure, to take steps after the elections to bring into being an Executive Council having the support of the main

Indian Parties, in order that India may deal herself with her own social and economic problems and may take her full part in working out the new world order.

The broad definition of British policy toward India contained in the Declaration of 1942, which had the support of all Parties in this country, stands in all its fullness and purpose. This Declaration envisaged the negotiation of a treaty between the British Government and the constitution-making body. The Government is giving immediate consideration to the contents of such a treaty. It can be said here that in that treaty we shall not seek to provide for anything incompatible with the interests of India. No one who has any acquaintance with Indian affairs will underestimate the difficulties which will have to be surmounted in the setting-up and smooth operation of the constitution-making body. Still greater is the difficulty which will face the elected representatives of the Indian people in seeking to frame a constitution for a great continent containing more than 400,000,000 human beings.

During the war, Indian fighting men have in Europe, Africa and Asia played a splendid part in defeating the forces of tyranny and aggression. India has shared to the full with the rest of the United Nations the task of saving freedom and democracy. Victory came through unity, and through the readiness of all to sink their differences in order to attain the supreme object, victory. I would ask all Indians to follow this great example and to join together in a united effort to work out a constitution which the majority and minority communities will accept as just and fair, a constitution in which both States and Provinces can find their place. The British Government will do their utmost to give every assistance in their power, and India can be assured of the sympathy of the British people.

For sixty years the National Congress has labored for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people, straining at a leash that has held them in bondage, trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to masses of our people in towns as well as in the remotest villages. From these masses it had gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organization, a living and vibrant symbol of India's will to freedom and independence. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone sufferings in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonor to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great empire. Following peaceful methods it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the three recent years of unprecedented mass upheaval and its cruel and ruthless suppression, Congress has risen stronger than ever and more loved by the people, by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man and woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius, it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted as far as possible on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

Congress has envisaged a free democratic state with the fundamental rights and civil liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in a constitution. This constitution in its view should be a federal one with a great deal of autonomy for its constituent units and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise.

One hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule have arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war and even now this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority and the complete ignoring of Indian interests and views has reached a new height of incompetence in administration, leading to terrible famine and widespread misery among our people. There is no way to solve any of these urgent problems except through freedom and independence. The content of political freedom must be both economic and social.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standards of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of these masses that Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that comes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, social services and public utilities must be encouraged, modernized and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self growth without dependence on others.

But all this must be done with the primary object, and paramount duty, of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic, cultural and spiritual level, removing unemployment and adding to the dignity of the individual. For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and coordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing and to have social control of mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in the land, industry and in other departments of national activity, so that free India may develop into a cooperative commonwealth.

In international affairs Congress stands for the establishment of a world federation of free nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbors on the East and West and the North. In the Far East, in South East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade also demand these closer contacts with

these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and cooperation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

On August 8, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's history. By its demand and challenge Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle cry that Congress faces elections for the central and provincial assemblies.

The Central Legislative Assembly is a body with no power or authority and is practically an advisory body whose advice has been constantly flouted and ignored. It is completely out of date and is based on a very restricted franchise. The electoral registers for it are full of errors and omissions and no opportunities for correcting or adding to them have been given. Large numbers of our countrymen are still in prison and many others, who have been released, are disqualified from standing for election. Obstructions in the way of holding public meetings still continue in many places.

Yet with all these and other handicaps and drawbacks Congress has decided to contest the elections to show that the inevitable results of the elections, however restricted, must be to demonstrate the overwhelming solidarity of opinion of the voters on the issue of independence. Therefore in this election petty issues do not count nor do individuals or sectarian cries—only one thing counts: the freedom and independence of our motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people.

So Congress appeals to the voters for the Central Assembly all over the country to support candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections and to stand by Congress at this critical

juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. Many a time the people of India have taken a pledge of independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed and the well beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often still beckons to us. But the time is coming when we shall redeem it in full and not by election but by what comes after it.

Meanwhile this election is a small test for us, preparation for greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for the freedom and independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the free India of our dreams.

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